















**TRUTH ABOUT INDIA:  
CAN WE GET IT?**





# Truth About India:

Can We Get It?

*by*

Verrier Elwin

With Seven Appendices

*Preface by*

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## NOTE

THIS book is based on a draft which Verrier Elwin was asked to prepare. As he has now taken up work for Gonds, an aboriginal people, in a very remote village two days from the rail-head, he is at present out of direct touch with the changes in the political situation in India, and so his manuscript has been carefully revised by friends first in Bombay, and then in London.



## P R E F A C E

THE title which Father Elwin has chosen for this pamphlet—*Truth About India*—is a summing-up, for many of India's well-wishers in this country, of their main difficulty. For if they really knew the truth, to be sure of it, the rest would be easy. Not, indeed, the critical process toward a solution of the present complication of affairs which persistent blindness, blunder, and delay have made doubly complicated—that is bound to be difficult; but at least they would see for themselves personally what their own position ought to be; they would not then (as so many are still doing) let practical difficulties outweigh moral principles.

Many people in this country are genuinely in doubt about our duty in this matter, because they do not know the truth. The truth may have been told them—fragments of it, at any rate; but they do not know it is the truth—and how are they to know? Much that is not true is told them—perhaps from both sides—by people who believe that what they tell is true, and in support of the untruth quote evidence which seems—and is to them—convincing. And yet what is so honestly told may not be the truth at all; while, on the other hand, what is so honestly doubted may actually be the truth which would decide our doubts if we could wholly believe it.

Where there is so great a conflict of evidence—the genuine, the exaggerated, and the manufactured inextricably mixed—the attitude of mind and temper of those on whose word we are asked to rely becomes enormously important. If, in their tendering of evidence, we detect malice, hatred, bitterness, obstinate refusal to see any good or honesty of purpose on the other side, many will draw back repelled and suspicious; and the truth may be undone and made of no effect by the manner of its presentment. And that—apart from his long experience of Indian life, and his close intimacy with and affection for the Indian people—is where the value of Father Elwin's testimony comes in. He has no hatred in him; he is not bitter; his affection for India, and his firm belief in her

right not merely to self-government but to independence, has not made him hostile to those of his own race, or unable to admit that many in high power and authority do honestly believe that England's hold over India is wholly for India's benefit. It is not an easy admission to make now that the Ordinances, with their inevitable products of injustice, oppression, concealment, and abuse of power, are in operation against a whole people. But the fact that he is so able to state the case, as he sees it, of the Truth about India, should recommend what he has to say to men of good will more strongly than any words of mine. Like St. Paul in his better moments, he "has the spirit with him"; and if that spirit could be extended to all the contestants alike, the problem would practically be solved—would at any rate be in process of solution on lines which would make the Ordinances as utterly foolish and useless in the eyes of all as they are now to so many indefensible and detestable.

LAURENCE HOUSMAN

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## A MESSAGE TO ENGLAND

I WAS privileged to be present at the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi in the early hours of Monday, January 4, 1932. In the half-hour that he was allowed for his preparations and farewells he wrote (for it was his silence day) a number of messages, among them the following note of friendship to all English people :

MY DEAR ELWIN,

I would like you to tell your own countrymen that I love them even as I love my own countrymen. I have never done anything towards them in hatred or malice, and, God willing, I shall never do anything in that manner in future. I am not acting differently towards them from what I have done under similar circumstances towards my kith and kin.

With love,

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

I have tried to write this pamphlet in that spirit. It is written in great love—love for India and love for Britain. It would be hard to say which I love the most. I have had to speak frankly—some will say harshly—but such frankness is vital if we are to have understanding, which is the basis of love, between the two great nations which should be friends. I want to make it clear that where I have had to criticize the actions of my fellow-countrymen in India, I have no antagonism towards individuals, but only towards the system. I am happy in counting many officials and police officers among my friends, and I know them to be men of the highest integrity who are doing their duty under conditions of great difficulty. But they are in an impossible position. The system is their enemy as much as India's. I long to see the day when both my Indian and my English friends will be free from a burden which is harmful to us as well.

VERRIER ELWIN

ASHRAM OF ST. FRANCIS,

KARANJIA, DIST. MANDLA, C.P.

*February 17, 1932*



# TRUTH ABOUT INDIA

## CAN WE GET IT?

### I

#### INTRODUCTORY: WHAT BRITAIN BELIEVES

THIS pamphlet is addressed to the many sincere men and women in Great Britain who are genuinely puzzled by the march of events in India. There is a large number of people, by no means "diehard" in their views, to whom Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress form an enigma. They consider that the Mahatma, for all his spirituality and moral power, is not a practical politician; he played the part of an obstructionist in London by his impossible demands, and on his return to India precipitated a crisis that was certain to bring suffering upon millions. His creed of civil disobedience is in their view full of danger; they think that it cannot be practised on a large scale without certain risk of violence, and that if it became common it would make all constitutional government impossible. Especially, they say, is civil disobedience unjustifiable at the present time, when Britain is eager to give India a large measure of self-government. To them Congress is only one of several political parties; its extremist views they think are not shared by the majority of Indians, who prefer the way of constitutional reform; and it is necessary, they feel, in order to give law-abiding citizens an opportunity to cooperate in the reforms, to create a peaceful atmosphere in the country, if necessary, with a firm hand. Any government, they argue, would do as we have done. So long as we are responsible for the government of India, we must govern.

Such an attitude, if it were based on the actual facts and psychological realities of the situation, would not be unreasonable. But I believe that it rests on a misunderstanding—a misunderstanding so grave that unless it is removed the future

relations of India and Britain may be permanently imperilled. This pamphlet, therefore, will aim at doing something to prevent this disaster by putting forward a full record of facts and another reading of the situation. This is the more necessary because of the very inadequate reports about India that appear in the British Press, and the misleading information that is issued from time to time from official sources. Shortly before his arrest, Mahatma Gandhi said: "To the Englishmen I would say, Beware of the false reports that are often dished up for you from morning to morning and from evening to evening as to the doings of the Congress in India. This feeding on false information, or starvation due to suppression of correct information, is the greatest barrier to heart-to-heart cooperation."

I will give some examples of this. The British Press, and even a statement issued by the Government of India, made it appear as if the first telegram (App. I, 1) sent by Mahatma Gandhi on his return to India, at the end of December 1931, asked for an interview with the Viceroy under threat of civil disobedience. If this were true, the Mahatma might rightly be accused of precipitancy. But, as everyone in India knows, it is not true. The Mahatma only foreshadowed the tentative possibility of civil disobedience after his request for a friendly and unconditional discussion had been rejected by the Viceroy.

In a speech which he delivered before a meeting of journalists in London on January 27th, Sir Samuel Hoare declared that "the large body of law-abiding people, Indian and European people alike," did not resent the Ordinances. "They realize," he said "that they are necessary in their own interests and, so far from complaining of them, they are in many instances relying on them with undisguised relief." There is no truth in this statement. The large body of law-abiding people regard the Ordinances with unmixed resentment and indignation. They were greeted by a storm of protest in the Legislative Assembly and the Madras Council. A host of public bodies have expressed their disapproval. The Liberal Association has declared that the Ordinances have contributed "in producing a most acute and widespread bitterness."

"Their wide scope and their administration without discrimination are calculated to increase bitterness, retard progress, and make a settlement more difficult than ever." A deputation of the Welfare of India League, which included the Round Table Conference delegate of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, the Mayor of Bombay, the Scotch Vice-Chancellor of the University, the English editor of a great Anglo-Indian daily, two prominent European business men, the president of the Millowners' Association, and the president of the India Merchants' Chamber, told the Governor of Bombay that "government by Ordinances is leading to strained relations between the Government and the people, and unless the policy is promptly reviewed and sufficiently modified, it threatens to create an insuperable barrier between the Government and the people which may make future cooperation difficult, if not impossible."

When Mr. Gandhi reached India at the end of December, the British Press generally reported that there was a hostile demonstration of "untouchables." Most of the papers reported nothing else. What actually happened was this. Some three hundred untouchables tried to create a hostile demonstration before the boat arrived; and they injured some Congress volunteers who, according to eye-witnesses, refused to retaliate. The police quelled the unruly demonstrators, and the whole affair was over before the boat arrived. The actual reception was a prodigious demonstration of welcome. One British correspondent who did send a true report said that the demonstration prepared by the Congress was as nothing compared to the spontaneous demonstrations of the crowds in the streets. The crowd that packed the huge Bombay *maidan* to hear Mr. Gandhi speak in the afternoon was estimated to have exceeded half a million. Photographs published in the Indian Press confirm such an estimate; they show a bewilderingly vast crowd. No doubt it included many thousands of untouchables. A great proportion of the crowd, too, were women. A few weeks later the Government of India banned films of this event. Those organs of the British Press who claim to be best informed reported nothing of all this.

## II

### THE NATIONAL CONGRESS

#### THE NATURE OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

One of the first difficulties in the English mind relates to the method of civil disobedience. A Deputy Commissioner once told me that he would, on the whole, prefer a violent revolution like the Irish revolution, because it did less permanent harm than civil disobedience. In a statement by the Government of India on January 4th (Appendix II, p. 75), this point is emphasized. "The civil disobedience as conceived and as practised by Congress is to paralyse the administration and to inflict the maximum of harm on Government, regardless of the loss it may entail to private individuals. It is opposed to all constitutional principles, and if it achieved its object it would make any form of government impossible. . . . In using their full resources against it the Government of India are, therefore, fighting the battle not only of the present Government, but of the Governments of the future."

This objection arises from a misunderstanding of the principles of Satyagraha,<sup>1</sup> of which civil disobedience is a part. Properly practised, Satyagraha ought never to weaken respect for law as such. "Before one can be fit for the practice

<sup>1</sup> Satyagraha literally means the Force that is born of Truth and Love, or non-violence. It is not quite the same as passive resistance. It is an active force. One of its branches is non-cooperation, which implies the withdrawal of cooperation from a Government which is believed to be corrupt. Civil disobedience (which presupposes the habit of willing obedience to laws without fear of their sanctions) means civil breach of unmoral statutory enactments. It signifies the outlawry of the civil resister in a non-violent manner. He invokes the sanctions of the law and cheerfully suffers imprisonment. The aim of Satyagraha is never destruction: it is the conversion of the opponent by self-suffering. Its principles are fully described in the writings of Mahatma Gandhi. Though there are obvious dangers and limitations to its use, Satyagraha has been proved practicable even on a nation-wide scale. It is a moral substitute for armed resistance, employing only the weapons of truth, non-violence, and self-sacrifice.

of civil disobedience," says the Mahatma, "one must have rendered a willing and respectful obedience to the State laws." For example, a true satyagrahi will not ride a bicycle in the dark without a lamp, as most of us do if we are sure there is no policeman about. "A satyagrahi obeys the laws of society intelligently and of his free own will, because he considers it his sacred duty to do so. It is only when a person has thus obeyed the laws of society scrupulously that he is in a position to judge as to which particular laws are good and just, and which unjust and iniquitous. Only then does the right accrue to him of civil disobedience of certain laws in well-defined circumstances." Further, the satyagrahi must prove his respect for law in general by accepting the alternative to obedience, namely, punishment, in a cheerful spirit. He must not seek to evade punishment. It is plain that no large mass of people will ever undertake such civil disobedience unless they are suffering from a very intense and very widespread sense of wrong. Effective civil disobedience could never be the weapon of a gang of dangerous and irresponsible law-breakers. It can only be undertaken when large numbers of ordinary, law-abiding people are driven to a point where continued obedience outrages their moral sense. It is very necessary to remember that most writers on political morality recognize the right of a people to rebel against tyranny. We are apt to imagine, however, that tyrannies are things of the past, or at least that no government for which the British are responsible would be justly regarded as tyrannical. But it should be observed that there are, in fact, no sure objective signs of a tyranny; the existence or otherwise of a tyranny is a subjective matter. When the mass of a people find the government under which they are living intolerable, the conditions of "tyranny" do in fact exist, whatever merits an outside observer may think he detects in the system of government. A good government, whether democratic in form or not, must always seek to express the general will of the governed, to rest on the only safe and sure foundation—that of popular consent and approval. When a tyranny arises, and the tyrant refuses to surrender his power, rebellion becomes inevitable. Hitherto such rebellions



have always used the weapons of armed violence. Mahatma Gandhi's greatness consists largely in this, that he has forged a weapon that can be used to overthrow the tyrant without destroying him or his agents.

A good government need not fear that it will be challenged by a widespread civil disobedience. The Government of India is not really fighting the battle of the Government of the future at all, because that Government will be an Indian Government existing at the will of the people, and responsible to the people. There will be no need for civil disobedience when India attains her freedom, for the people will have constitutional means of expressing their will and getting redress for their grievances. Civil disobedience is normally only necessary under an autocratic and irresponsible government.

And apart from civil disobedience, in what way are the people to make their demands felt? This question has been vigorously expressed by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya<sup>1</sup> in his letter to the Viceroy. "Suppose," he said, "the feeling is deepening that the conditions of existence are becoming unbearable and the minds of millions are getting more and more agitated over it. Will you let their thoughts turn to ways of violence or will you lead them to think that they can obtain the redress they desire and the end they wish to achieve by the peaceful method of civil disobedience, of truth and fearlessness, of non-violence and self-sacrifice, in which the person who disobeys inflicts no injury on his oppressor or on anyone else, but endeavours to persuade him to his view by appealing to the humanity in him, by inviting suffering upon himself and bearing it with calm non-violence? Do not let racial pride or narrow national self-interest blind you to the glorious possibilities of this method. It is a matter for supreme thankfulness for all mankind that, under God's providence, one of our fellow-men has been inspired to show them a way of avoiding the evils of war and of achieving the right by the

<sup>1</sup> Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya is one of the leading "elder statesmen" of nationalist India, a man of moderate outlook, very widely respected, especially among orthodox Hindus. He was a member of the Round Table Conference.

method of civil disobedience. A wise and humane government should welcome and encourage, and not think of crushing it and thereby driving people to think that the method of war and violence is still the only effective method of regaining and upholding the liberty and justice which are the birthright of every man and woman. I would therefore beg your Excellency and the Government to revise your view of civil disobedience. It is not such an unmixed evil as you have held it to be. It is on the contrary a valuable civil means in the hands of a citizen for the protection of his elementary rights." (Appendix V.)

Whenever an Indian has recourse to violence, whether it be an attempted assassination, or stone-throwing by a crowd, immediately the English Press broadcasts the facts. But the daily activities of thousands of non-violent picketers of liquor and cloth shops, not to mention the repeated beatings of them by the police, are quite ignored. Is it not almost inevitable that Indians should draw the conclusion that nothing but violence can shake the people of England out of their complacency? Every time the British Press reports acts of violence by Indians and ignores their acts of civil disobedience and the violence of the police, assassination is encouraged. Yet, in spite of this tendency of the British Press, so great has been the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues and of ancient Hindu tradition, that the response to the present Ordinances has been almost entirely non-violent. Consequently the British public has been lulled into a false and dangerous complacency, based on ignorance of the widespread and continued protest that is being offered all over India.

There is a tendency in England to want to have things both ways. If there is no violence we are assured that India is pacified and that the civil disobedience is dying; if there is violence, angry things are said about the futility of Mahatma Gandhi's preaching of non-violence.

The value of this weapon in the hands of social reformers and the so-called "untouchables" has been fully demonstrated in recent years.

## CONGRESS AND VIOLENCE

"Mr. Gandhi," declares the Statement of the Government of India, "has stated as part of his creed, that civil disobedience is not only the natural right of the people, especially when they had no effective voice in their own government, but that it is also an effective substitute for violence and armed rebellion. Experience has proved time and again that in this country disobedience cannot be carried on without violence and Mr. Gandhi himself has spoken of the sacrifice of a million lives."

The truth is that in the civil disobedience campaigns in India, the violence has been largely on the part of the Government; and the million lives of which the Mahatma spoke were not the lives of his opponents, but the lives of himself and his own people that were to be offered, in the spirit of love and sacrifice, to the lathis and bullets of the authorities. There has been a little, a very little, violence on the part of some supporters of the Congress. Here and there you will find some stone-throwing; now and then a crowd has got out of hand; the aboriginal tribes which were (in my opinion, mistakenly) roused to offer Satyagraha did not remain non-violent; on several occasions the atmosphere of tense political excitement in the country has led to rioting or worse. At such times, as, for example, during the communal outbreak in Cawnpore in 1931, Congressmen played a heroic part in trying to allay communal hatred. This is probably the most serious charge that can be made against the Congress—that it has created an atmosphere of excitement and uncertainty, of which those wedded to violence have sometimes taken advantage.

But how much there is to be said on the other side! By untiring and energetic propaganda a great revolutionary movement has been kept on the path of non-violence. In the North-West Frontier Province the success of this propaganda has been almost miraculous. The Pathan, accustomed for hundreds of years to settle every dispute by force, has learnt to bear repression and humiliation without retaliating. Sirdar Vallabhai Patel, in his Presidential Address at the

Karachi Congress of 1931, did not claim too much in saying: "Though there have been aberrations, it is a fact beyond challenge that India has given a singular proof to the world that mass non-violence is no longer the idle dream of the visionary, or a mere human longing. . . . The greatest proof that our movement was non-violent lies in the fact that the peasants falsified the fears of our worst sceptics. They were described as very difficult to organize for non-violent action, and it is they who stood the test with a bravery and an endurance that was beyond all expectation." We have indeed seen violence in its ugliest and most brutal form in India—but it has been on the part of the authorities, or of the communal partisans, not of Congress.

Congress, in fact, has been the bulwark standing between the British official and the assassin. Congress must have saved the lives of thousands of Englishmen in India. "We do not want the freedom of India," said Mahatma Gandhi, "if it is to be bought at the sacrifice of the lives of others—if it is to be bought by spilling the blood of the rulers."

Nothing could be more unfair, nothing could be meaner, than to lay responsibility for the terrorist outrages in Bengal at the door of the Congress. They have no connection whatever with Congress; they were occurring long before Congress adopted its present policy, they do far more harm to Congress than to Government. Every Congress leader has denounced terrorism, and the whole weight of Congress influence is thrown into the scales against it. And yet the most unscrupulous propaganda is carried on, and you will hear, for example, that Mahatma Gandhi deserves punishment as an instigator of murder. An example from my own experience will illustrate this point. Last December I made a prolonged tour in the United Provinces with Acharya Kirpalani, the organizer of all khadi<sup>1</sup> activities in the province. I suppose we addressed some fifty meetings during our tour, and, besides speaking on the economic and moral value of khadi, never failed to explain the philosophy of non-violence and to deliver a fervent appeal that India should make love and truth the basis of all her

<sup>1</sup> Khadi means hand-spun and hand-woven cloth.

international relationships. Both of us are enthusiastic pacifists. But when the tour was over, I found that the C.I.D.<sup>1</sup> had reported us as promoting violence and inciting to murder, that the local Government had circulated special warnings about me as a result and had sent a complaint to my Bishop.

This should be borne in mind by those who read the Government's publications in defence of its action—for instance, the Blue book Cmd. 4014 published by the Secretary of State in February 1932. These documents contain various allegations against Congress leaders of incitement to violence or race hatred. It should be remembered that such allegations are presumably based on the dubious reports of the C.I.D.

The method of civil disobedience, or more widely Satyagraha, is in the making. No one would claim that Congress has made no mistakes. There has been bitterness, untruth, exaggerated propaganda, suspicion and distrust, occasional violence. But such things are rare, and we Englishmen who had our share in the cataclysm of violence that swept over Europe in the Great War can ill afford to criticize. It is difficult to estimate how many of the active workers in the Congress have really imbibed Mahatma Gandhi's hard doctrine of "non-violence in thought, word, or deed." But those Englishmen who have made intimate acquaintance with the movement—and they are, it is to be feared, very few—are all impressed by the number of humble workers whose whole nature shines with love and forbearance. Taking India as a whole there must be some thousands of this calibre. A great people is slowly learning a difficult and unfamiliar technique of revolution. If it succeeds it will have given the world a substitute for armed rebellion. The general effect of the movement has not by any means discouraged respect for law, or encouraged violence and race hatred; it has roused a whole nation to a new dignity and self-respect. By re-creating its lost manliness in the fires of suffering it has prepared it for self-government.

<sup>1</sup> Criminal Investigation Department, employed by Government to keep a watch on all political or kindred activities which are suspected of hostility to the Government.

## THE POSITION OF THE CONGRESS

But why, perhaps an objector may ask, should one section of Indian politicians be allowed to plunge the entire country into anarchy? Surely it is better that Congress agitation should be controlled in order to give the more reasonable Indian politicians a chance. The answer to this question is of great importance. It is vital that English people should understand the real position of Congress in India. The belief that Congress is only one among a number of contending political parties, and a persistent attempt on the part of Government to ignore and minimize its influence, has in part been responsible for the present tragedy in India. The cartoon in *Punch* which represents the Mahatma in jail and the Viceroy turning away from the prison gate "to hear the *real* voice of India" would be ludicrous if it were not calculated to create a dangerous misunderstanding. English people are easily misled by seeing at the Round Table Conference one Congress delegate among a host of others. They forget, in the Mahatma's words, "that the other parties are magnified into representative parties by Government themselves, and that the Congress is the only body which can claim to represent the whole of the masses of India, who form ninety per cent. of the population." At the Round Table Conference Mahatma Gandhi again and again pressed the claim of Congress to represent the nation. It was not only the one spokesman of "the dumb, toiling, semi-starved millions"; by right of service it also represented the princes, the landed gentry, and the educated classes. "All the other parties represent sectional interests. Congress alone claims to represent the whole of India and all interests." "It is what it means—national. It represents no particular community, no particular class, no particular interest. It claims to represent all Indian interests and all classes." "Congress knows no distinction of race, colour, or creed; its platform is universal." Membership of the Congress is open to all men and women subject to three conditions: (a) they must be eighteen years of age; (b) they must sign its creed; (c) they must pay four annas a year or spin two

thousand yards of yarn a year from cotton supplied by a local Congress Committee. The Congress was first conceived in an English brain. It was nursed by two great Parsis. "From the very commencement it had Mussalmans, Christians, Anglo-Indians, I might say all religions, sects, creeds, represented on it more or less fully." It is far from being a Hindu, still less a Brahmin, organization. In the North-West Frontier Province its organization (which is one of the strongest in India) is almost entirely Mussalman. From the earliest days Congress has taken up the cause of the so-called "untouchables." Despite the opposition of Dr. Ambedkar, who represents only a section of them, and despite the fact that some Congressmen do not live up to the Congress creed in this matter, there can be no doubt that Congress, with the Christian missionaries, is the greatest friend of the "untouchables" today (Appendix VII, 3). "I would not sell the vital interests of the untouchables," declared Mahatma Gandhi, at the Minorities Committee of the Round Table Conference, "even for the sake of winning the freedom of India."

I myself have toured in many parts of India, especially in village areas. I have been astonished at the influence of Congress among the peasants and the very poor. It has won this influence, not by agitation, but by service. It has brought relief to tens of thousands by re-creating the village spinning industry. It has stimulated social work for the depressed classes and the aboriginal tribes. Even in the towns, where you may find many who do not actually support it, you will discover that it commands very general sympathy and any action taken to suppress it is keenly resented. In very many Indian homes you will find pictures of the Congress leaders; but I have never seen the pictures of the so-called leaders who were supposed to represent India at the Round Table Conference. The great majority of Indians do not even know their names. But the names of the Congress leaders are on the lips and deep in the hearts of the people in every corner of India.

"The Congress," said the Mahatma in Birmingham, "is the only representative body speaking for the vast masses in India. It is the one live, organic, and independent organization that

has been functioning for close upon fifty years. It is the only organization that has stood the test of untold suffering. It is the Congress which arrived at a settlement with the Government and, say what you will, it is the only organization that will one day replace the present Government."

I have dwelt on this point at some length because of its real importance. The natural effect on the British mind created by the spectacle of quarrelling delegates at the Round Table Conference was that India was not agreed as to what it wanted, that it did not want independence and certainly did not deserve it, and that if self-government were to be given now the country would be torn to pieces by the contending factions. Englishmen do not sufficiently realize that the Round Table Conference was an assembly of Government nominees; the delegates were not elected representatives, they were responsible to nobody (Appendix VII, 1). It was the voice of Mahatma Gandhi, raised in unceasing protest even against his own countrymen, that represented the real voice of India.

In the Mahatma the Congress has a leader of unique political insight. Many Englishmen regard him as a mere "wild man of God," an unpractical idealist who has no head for hard realities. In fact, Mahatma Gandhi, just because he is the most spiritual, is also the most practical of Indian statesmen. Mr. Lloyd George immediately recognized this quality in him. So insistent, on the other hand, has been the emphasis on his "evading issues" that many minds are closed to his record of practical achievement. It has been detailed in a most attractive way in a series of volumes, beginning with *Satyagraha in South Africa*, perhaps the most illuminating of all. He is an experienced strategist. His ascetic life keeps him in touch with the masses and their needs. He is not, perhaps, an expert constitution-maker, but he is a supreme nation-builder. He is not the less practical because he bases his politics largely on the Sermon on the Mount.

#### THE CONGRESS CLAIM

But even so, there are many who might admit the right of Congress to speak for India, and who would even recog-



nize civil disobedience as a legitimate weapon under certain circumstances, who would yet deplore its use at the present time, at the very moment when the Government of India is pressing forward with unprecedented schemes of reform.

The only answer to this is to reiterate the demands of India ; for the aims of Congress are shared by many of all communities who do not adopt its methods. It is necessary that we should understand those demands, for otherwise we shall be led to think that the present political agitation in India is unreasonable. India wants real freedom. She wants control over her own purse. She wants control over the army. She is willing to accept such adjustments (or safeguards) "as may be demonstrably necessary in the interests of India." This independence certainly does not exclude, despite persistent affirmation to the contrary, the possibility of an equal and honourable partnership with Britain. But it must be a real partnership, the same kind of partnership that might exist between Britain and America, which could be terminated at the will of either party.

At the Raleigh Club in Oxford, the Mahatma was asked, "How far will you cut India off from the Empire?" "From the Empire entirely, from the British nation not at all, if I want India to gain and not to grieve. The British Empire is an empire only because of India. That Emperorship must go ; but I should love to be equal partner with Britain, sharing her joys and sorrows, and equal partner with all Dominions. But it must be a partnership on equal terms."

Dominion Status is rejected not so much as giving insufficient freedom ; but because it appears to be the wrong kind of freedom. "There was a time," says the Mahatma, "when I was enamoured of Dominion Status, but I have found that Dominion Status is a status common to members of the same family—Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, etc. These are daughter states in a sense that India is not. The bulk of the population of these countries is English-speaking, and their status implies some kind of relationship with Britain. The Lahore Congress erased the idea of Empire from the minds of Indians and placed independence in front of them.

Karachi provided the interpretation, which is this, that only as an independent people could we have partnership with Great Britain if, of course, she wants it. So long as the Empire idea persists, the centre will be Downing Street, but with India as an independent partner with Britain, the centre of policies would change from Downing Street to Delhi." English readers may say, "But all this is just what we do mean by Dominion Status. Canada, Australia, and the rest are not ruled from Downing Street." This is true enough. It is not the term Mahatma Gandhi objects to; he objects, and India objects, to any status that may in fact prove to be inferior. Mr. Gandhi wants a real partnership which either Britain or India could terminate if either found it onerous.

Many officials have told me how unreasonable Congress agitation is in view of the fact that in the course of the next few years nearly all positions of responsibility will have been transferred from Englishmen to Indians. But that is not the point. Such a transfer does not necessarily spell freedom; it might be only a more subtle form of bondage. Independence "does not mean ruling India through deputies, that is, Indian agents rather than English agents. Complete independence means national government."

### III

## THE CRISIS

### WHO FORCED THE PRESENT CONFLICT?

But, it may be argued, even if the proposed reforms did fall short of the Congress demand, Mahatma Gandhi should have shown more patience and greater faith in the possibility of constitutional advance. Instead of this, however, he no sooner returned to India than he allowed his hand to be forced by his extremist colleagues, and precipitated the country into the disturbance and misery of a fresh campaign of civil disobedience: so it is alleged.

The question of responsibility for the present conflict is of great importance and must be carefully examined. On January 4th a lengthy statement (Appendix II) explaining their policy towards the Congress was issued by Government over the signature of Mr. Emerson. Mr. Emerson's case is that, while Government scrupulously observed the terms of the Delhi Settlement, the Congress deliberately utilized the period of truce as a means of preparation for further conflict, and exploited the settlement for the purpose of adding to its prestige and of securing for itself a position of privilege not enjoyed by any other organization. Congress, it is alleged, openly carried on preparations for a renewal of civil disobedience. It laid particular stress on the consolidation of its position in rural areas, and missed no opportunity to exploit the economic situation for that purpose. It tried to establish itself as a body whose advice had to be accepted in matters relating to Land Revenue and Rent. It interfered with private liberty and the freedom of trade. In striking contrast to this policy of fostering a "war mentality," Government pursued a course of deliberate forbearance, and pressed forward on the path of constitutional reform, which included proposals to constitute the North-West Frontier Province as a Governor's Province. Mahatma Gandhi had given no clear indication of whether he was willing to cooperate in

the fulfilment of these reforms. In the meanwhile Congress had precipitated a conflict with Government in the United Provinces and in the North-West Frontier Province, and proposals had been initiated to start a campaign elsewhere for the boycott of British goods and institutions. "The main issue before Government was whether Congress were prepared or not to cooperate in further constitutional discussions, and it was essential to ascertain their attitude and that of Mr. Gandhi towards this fundamental question. It was plain that there could be no cooperation, in any accepted sense of the term, so long as the activities in the United Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province continued. It was also clear that there could be no cooperation under a continuous menace of the renewal of civil disobedience. The telegram of Mr. Gandhi of January 1st and the resolutions of the Working Committee of Congress passed under his advice have left no doubt on this issue. Under the specific threat of a general renewal of civil disobedience, the programme of which has been announced, the Government of India have been asked to accept conditions which would make Mr. Gandhi the arbiter of measures necessary for the maintenance of law and order and which would leave Congress free to pursue their subversive activities as seemed fit to them. The measure of the cooperation which Congress would extend in return for the acceptance of these conditions is indicated by the announcement of the Working Committee. They have pronounced the declaration of the Prime Minister to be wholly unsatisfactory and inadequate in terms of the Congress demands and they have demanded that if their cooperation be accepted free scope be given to them to prosecute their claims to complete independence. There was clearly no alternative left the Government of India but to reject these demands and to take all measures that were necessary to meet the campaign of civil disobedience."

This, in essence, is Government's case. If it is true, then responsibility for the present conflict lies with the Congress. At the very outset, let us admit that Congress had little to do in the conclusions of the Round Table Conference and

that, as I have already described, its aim was nothing less than complete independence. But the Mahatma had not given up hope of further negotiations, although in speeches in England he had foreshadowed the possibility that the country would have to endure yet another "fiery ordeal" before it gained its freedom. No one denies that during the period of the Truce Congress tried to consolidate its position and add to its prestige. There was nothing wrong in that. Any other political organization would have done the same. Government certainly did so. In rural areas, as in Gujerat, Congress was able to be of considerable assistance to Government in collecting taxes—a fact that was gratefully acknowledged by the local authorities. Congress already occupied a privileged position in virtue of being one of the contracting parties to the Delhi Settlement. And far from such a position being a crime, as Mahatma Gandhi said, "any Government jealous of the welfare of the masses in its charge would welcome the voluntary cooperation of a body like the Congress, which admittedly exercises great influence over the masses and whose ambition is to serve them faithfully."

The real failure to observe the spirit of the Settlement appears to me to have been on the other side. Local Governments showed their utmost unwillingness to follow the lead of Lord Irwin. Mahatma Gandhi had great difficulty in persuading them to give full effect to the political amnesty. At a time when he should have been free to attend to large constitutional questions he had to spend laborious days in the villages securing justice in matters of small detail. He never managed to secure the re-admission of students who had been dismissed on political grounds from educational institutions. The local authorities put every obstacle in the way of restoration to the original owners of lands in Kaira and Bardoli that had been sold to third parties. In Ahmedabad, rules about the hours and places of the sale of liquor were deliberately relaxed in order to circumvent the peaceful picketing that was permitted under the Settlement. No fewer than three lengthy charge sheets had to be drawn up by Mahatma Gandhi and submitted to Government. If it be asked why he devoted himself to all

these details, the answer is simple; having himself negotiated the agreement, he was morally bound to see that it was properly carried out; moreover, he always judges a policy by its results for the individual citizen, for the peasant; his interest is Mr. Gandhi's first concern.

Nor was Government itself behindhand in preparing for a future conflict. Ceaseless propaganda was carried on against the Congress. A circular letter, for example, was issued by a United Provinces collector directing taluqdars to furnish complaints against Congressmen. A similar letter was issued by a collector in Karnatak to police officers. The revival of civil disobedience sooner or later was to be regarded as a foregone certainty, and district police officers were asked to keep a close watch on the movements and utterances of all Congressmen with a view to facilitating their prosecution when the time for it came. The speed and thoroughness with which it was able to strike on the renewal of civil disobedience show how well Government used the Truce as a preparation for conflict.

### THE UNITED PROVINCES

We must now consider the charge that Congress precipitated the conflict with Government in the United Provinces. The state of the United Provinces peasant is pitiable. To visit the villages in the eastern districts of the province is a heart-breaking experience. You will enter a tumbledown hovel, inhabited by living skeletons half clad in scanty rags. In a dirty corner there will be lying a sick child covered with swarms of flies. In the lustreless eyes of the mother you will read utter hopelessness, complete misery. There is almost nothing to eat. In the last few years, flood, hailstorm, frost, and locust have ruined the scanty crops time and again. To complete this obvious ruin has come the mysterious fall in prices which has snatched from the people even what livelihood they had. Upon these starving villagers there falls with merciless regularity the demand for rent. Unable to pay, they are beaten, abused, turned out of what shelter they have, robbed of half their possessions. And while their earning capacity has fallen

by 50 per cent. the rent and revenue demands have been steadily rising.

The Congress would have forfeited its claim to be a peasant organization if it had not espoused the cause of these unhappy people. Immediately after the Delhi Settlement, Congress leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi, approached Government with a view to obtain relief. The Mahatma later wrote to the Home Secretary that under certain conditions the Congress should be free to adopt defensive direct action, notwithstanding the suspension of civil disobedience.

Government sanctioned remissions to the extent of a little over two and a half annas in the rupee.<sup>1</sup> But the price of agricultural produce had fallen by over eight annas in the rupee, and the Congress voiced the feelings of the peasants in declaring the proposed remissions totally inadequate. Negotiations between Government and Congress were in progress when the rents for the coming year began to be demanded. The peasants were told that if the year's rent was not paid within a month, even the remissions might be withdrawn. No objections could be raised without payment of the rent demanded. Still Congress tried the way of negotiation, but when this proved ineffective, it had no alternative but to advise suspension of payment pending the result of negotiations. It was made clear, however, that Congress would withdraw this advice if the authorities on their own initiative suspended collections on the same condition.

This can hardly be called a no-rent campaign. It was certainly not a class war. Congress made it clear that "the no-rent proposals were in no way aimed at the landlords, but that they represented an economic necessity for the peasantry, which was known to be half-starved and suffering from unprecedented economic distress." It is evident that it was not Congress alone which forced the conflict. Government could easily, without loss to itself or the landlords, have issued instructions for the temporary postponement of the collections of rents until negotiations were concluded. But Government precipitated a conflict, first by demanding payment while

<sup>1</sup> A rupee consists of sixteen annas.

negotiations about the payment were still in progress, and then by promulgating an Ordinance of a severity out of all proportion to the necessities of the situation.

The real aim of the Government was revealed in the arrest of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The Ordinance was professedly intended to maintain law and order in the United Provinces, and with this end in view Pandit Jawaharlal was served with an order restricting his movements. As far as this concerned his activities within the Province, this was reasonable. But the Pandit had to go to Bombay to meet Mahatma Gandhi. His going could have no possible effect on the situation in the United Provinces except to better it through the advice of the Mahatma. But he was arrested *en route* and for a purely technical offence given two years' imprisonment.

The sequel is interesting. The United Provinces Government very soon issued reassuring statements, its officials reported that, the Congress agitators having been removed, rents were coming in well, the agitation was dying a natural death, and the peasants had no complaints to make. A few weeks later some European visitors went to investigate the situation in certain of these villages. On their arrival the villagers, mistaking them for officials, began to assure them that they had nothing to do with the Congress. When they had learned their real mission, however, their tone completely changed; and they were loud in their complaints of their intolerable economic plight.

This is an illuminating example of the fact that what officials, in perfect good faith, may report as true is very often far from the truth.

#### THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE

In the North-West Frontier Province, the action of Government was even more indefensible. It is true that Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan used the Truce as an opportunity to organize the Congress Movement on the Frontier. Except for the tone of some of his speeches, however, he was careful to observe the terms of the Delhi Settlement, and took no important step without consulting Mahatma Gandhi. What he did



achieve was to spread the idea of non-violence widely among the Pathans, to create in them some sort of political consciousness, and to organize a very large army of strictly pacifist volunteers. His great crime was that he was too successful. He became a rival to the Chief Commissioner. The Viceroy defended the promulgation of the Frontier Ordinance and arrest without trial of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan by asserting that the latter had continuously engaged in activities against Government and in fomenting racial hatred. He had "persistently refused all overtures by the Chief Commissioner to secure his cooperation and, rejecting the declaration of the Prime Minister, had declared in favour of complete independence" (Appendix I, 2). To this charge, Mahatma Gandhi's reply is sufficient. "If Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan asserted the right to complete independence, it was a natural claim and a claim made with impunity by the Congress at Lahore in 1929, and by me with energy put before the British Government in London. Moreover, let me remind the Viceroy that despite the knowledge on the Government's part that the Congress mandate contained such a claim, I was invited to attend the London Conference as the Congress delegate. Nor am I able to detect in a mere refusal to attend a Durbar [he had refused the Chief Commissioner's invitation to a Durbar at which the proposed reforms were to be explained] a crime warranting summary imprisonment." Some of his speeches, if correctly reported, do indeed seem likely to foment racial hatred, but if the Khan Sahib were fomenting racial hatred he was entitled to an open trial where he could have defended himself against the accusation.

There was no warrant whatever for the promulgation of the Frontier Ordinance except the desire of Government to crush the Congress movement in the Province. Abdul Ghaffar Khan was no danger to the public peace. There were no riots, no assassinations. My own impression, after a personal visit to the Frontier, was that Abdul Ghaffar Khan had lessened the amount of racial hatred, he had not increased it. As a speaker in the Assembly observed, he deserves a reward rather than imprisonment for his great national service of

promoting the spirit of non-violence.<sup>1</sup> He was in fact simply doing what the Government (if it were sincere in its professions to hand over political power to India) should have welcomed—creating a political consciousness among the people, and thus preparing them in the most practical way for self-government. By the Ordinance (of which Sir Abdur Rahim<sup>2</sup> said that he could hardly believe his eyes when he read it) Government declared war on the Congress in the Frontier Province, and deliberately provoked a conflict.<sup>3</sup>

So much for the specific charges against the Congress. But let us dig a little deeper. Politically-conscious India—not only the Congress—has for years been losing faith in Britain. Fair promises do not seem to lead anywhere but to coercion and more coercion. The strong arm is visible; the arrogance of the European resident and visitor is too often visible; the promised self-government tarries. A comparatively small proportion of Indians go on cooperating with the Government, either because their livelihood depends upon it, or because they sincerely believe that cooperation, however difficult, is the right course to follow under all circumstances. But for many years now the Congress, representing the vast mass of opinion, owing to this loss of faith has refused to cooperate and has followed a policy of either passive or active non-cooperation. The most intense period of non-cooperation was during 1930 and 1931. Then the miracle happened. Lord Irwin and Mahatma Gandhi met together as man with man and they established faith in one another. The terms of the pact they made startled many on both sides. Each man did his utmost to persuade his subordinates and followers—the officials on

<sup>1</sup> In the Indian Council of State on February 25th, Mr. Emerson, Home Secretary, in answer to questions put by Mushir Hussan Kidwai, stated that, from February 1, 1931, to January 31, 1932, there were thirteen terrorist outrages in India which resulted fatally. Six of these were in Bengal. None were on the Frontier.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Abdur Rahim is a distinguished Indian Moslem. He was a member of the Round Table Conference. He is not a member of the Congress.

<sup>3</sup> For a fuller account of what happened in the North-West Frontier Province at the end of the year, see Verrier Elwin's own report, published by the *Friends of India*, 46, Lancaster Gate, price 1d.

the one side, the Congress members on the other—to accept the pact both in the letter and in the spirit.

They were asking a great deal of human nature. In some cases, on both sides, they were clearly asking too much. Many who no doubt honestly tried to carry out the letter of the pact, found it more difficult to accept the spirit. Was the official really to forget the prestige of office, and treat the aggressive, upstart Congress worker as a valued collaborator—and to go on so treating him, even if he did not immediately get a friendly response? Was the Congressman, who for years had regarded the official as the agent of an alien oppressor, suddenly to treat him as his colleague in the building of the new, free India?

It is perhaps wonderful that the pact worked as well as it did. It is certainly not surprising that many on both sides were completely sceptical about the motives and intentions of the other side, and saw in every step taken a fresh attempt to prepare for a renewed conflict. Two great men had enacted a great gesture of faith. There proved to be too few, on the one side or the other, who were worthy of such an act.

#### MR. GANDHI'S RETURN TO INDIA

Such was the position when Mahatma Gandhi returned to India. Government had met the terrorist movement in Bengal by a policy of counter-terrorism, and was using its extraordinary powers to crush all anti-Government political activities in the Province. In the United Provinces it had forced the hands of Congress, and had arrested Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the idol of the youth of India, on utterly inadequate grounds, knowing how provocative his arrest would be. On the Frontier the Chief Commissioner, jealous of his prestige, had declared open war on the Congress and was carrying on the struggle with a ruthless severity that shocked even the most "moderate" politicians.

But the Mahatma still did not give up hope of cooperation. He knew the Viceroy well, and counted him as a friend. He did not yet realize that the spirit of Lord Irwin's policy was dead. In London he had discussed the Ordinances with the

Premier and the Secretary of State. The Premier had asked him to place his point of view before the Viceroy and to use his influence to turn the Bengal terrorists from the path of violence. Not unnaturally the Mahatma expected that if he could discuss the Ordinances with the Premier, he could discuss them with the Viceroy. He sent a telegram (Appendix I, 1), suggesting an interview. It was a friendly, almost intimate request for guidance. It imposed no conditions. It contained no threats. It made no assumption of privilege. It did express respectful astonishment at the arrest of his intimates just before his return from England, but if ever a man held out the olive branch of peace, it was Mahatma Gandhi in his first telegram.<sup>1</sup> The Viceroy's reply came like a thunderbolt. It was the voice of the old administration, the India of the eighteen-sixties. Unconciliatory and even autocratic, it offered

<sup>1</sup> Some readers may think that Mr. Gandhi had already shown his intention of "declaring war" in the "Rome interview" which was widely published in this country just when Mr. Gandhi was leaving Europe. In that interview, which Mr. Gandhi was alleged to have given as an exclusive statement to the *Giornale d'Italia*, just before he left Rome, he was alleged to have made some statements very hostile to Britain and foreshadowing an immediate resumption of the conflict. These statements, and the whole tone of the "interview," seemed to his friends in England to be so completely contradictory, not only to the statements he had made, both publicly and in private, just before he left England, but so contrary to the tenor of his mind, that a cable was sent to the boat on which he was travelling, giving the details of the interview and asking for confirmation or denial. The reply was a denial, both of the fact of the interview and of the opinions attributed to him, and a reassertion of his determination to continue cooperation if possible. In spite of this denial, various people have continued to speak as if the Rome interview had actually taken place. His travelling companions, including M. Edmond Privat, professor at Geneva, and Miss Muriel Lester, who was Mr. Gandhi's hostess in England, have publicly stated that Mr. Gandhi gave no newspaper interview in Italy, although, with his habitual courtesy, he answered a few trivial, non-political questions put to him by newspaper correspondents on the train and on his early morning walk. They also declare that it is quite at variance with the sentiments he expressed in private. There seem to be two possible explanations of the interview. Either it was a betrayal of confidence—and a gross distortion—on the part of one of the very few people (one of them was Mussolini) whom he met privately in Rome. Or it was a malicious fabrication, either by someone purporting to be in Mr. Gandhi's confidence or by an unscrupulous journalist.

an interview only on meaningless terms such as no self-respecting man could accept. As Mr. Brailsford wrote in *The New Leader*, "The Viceroy bluntly refused, under any circumstances, to discuss the Ordinances. That was on his part a pose as petty as it was unreasoning. If the Government asks the leaders of Indian opinion to cooperate with it in combating terrorism (as Lord Willingdon did), it cannot reasonably refuse to discuss with them the methods by which it should be fought. The case for consultation was all the stronger, since in fact these Ordinances are being used as much to repress an economic movement of a normally patient peasantry as to deal with a revolutionary conspiracy. One can govern India with Indian opinion or against it. If one desires to enlist its support, one must consult its leaders. It is fantastic to summon Mr. Gandhi to London to discuss the rights which Indians shall enjoy to-morrow and at the same time to refuse to listen when he would defend such rights as they ought to enjoy to-day" (Appendix I, 2).

Even the semi-official organ, *The Times of India*, regretted the Viceroy's action, while the moderate *Servant of India* declared: "The Viceroy's action in refusing to let the greatest political leader in the country place his views regarding the Ordinances before the head of the Government cannot but be deplored as a blunder. It was both indefensible and discourteous. His Excellency later agreed at the request of Sir Pheroze Sethna to receive a deputation of representatives of public bodies all over India in connection with the Ordinances, but could not allow the Mahatma to approach him on the same subject. The country had a right to expect something better than an uncompromising assertion of autocratic power from the Viceroy who had more than once declared his ambition to be the constitutional Governor-General of India."

It was only now that Mahatma Gandhi foreshadowed the possibility of civil disobedience (Appendix I, 3). It is very important to remember this. There was no threat of civil disobedience when the Mahatma asked for an interview. Even in the second telegram, there was no threat, but uncertainty as to his own freedom, and, as we shall see, the Mahatma's passion

for truth compelled him to tell the Viceroy frankly what would follow a breakdown of negotiations. "The Working Committee," he said, "has accepted my advice and passed a resolution tentatively sketching the plan of civil disobedience. . . . If His Excellency thinks it worth while to see me, pending discussion, operation of the resolution will be suspended in the hope that discussions may result in the resolution being finally given up."

There is no foundation for the belief that Mahatma Gandhi was stampeded into sending this telegram by his more extreme colleagues. The members of the Working Committee were ready to adopt any policy favoured by the Mahatma. In fact the Mahatma expressly told a deputation of the Welfare of India League that the responsibility was his. "It grieves me to find the suggestion being made that I was overborne by my extremist colleagues. I am the arch-extremist. I have not found colleagues who give me more loyal allegiance than has been given me during the last four days. There has been no goading on the part of my colleagues, and all the resolutions and telegrams have been drafted by me. They have accepted me as an expert in these matters and left the whole field open to me."

He goes on to explain how the other members of the Committee were against publishing the civil disobedience resolution. "It was I who said 'No.' If I suppressed it, I would be unfair to the Viceroy and the nation. Having passed the resolution, I said the Viceroy must be placed in possession of the full facts." It was not the Congress extremists who sent this telegram; it was the Mahatma, the man who was longing for cooperation, the sincere friend of England who was forced into doing so by the logic of events, and by his insistence on open diplomacy.

It was in his reply to the Mahatma's *second* telegram that the Viceroy made his point that it would be useless to have any discussion under the threat of civil disobedience. Even this was unjustified. Mahatma Gandhi expressed his feelings to a gathering of Pressmen: "It is a matter of deep regret to me I have received this telegram from H.E. the Viceroy and his Government. I cannot help thinking that he has

heaped error upon error, instead of courageously acknowledging the first error. In practically banging the door in my face by imposing for the coveted interview conditions which no self-respecting man can possibly accept, instead of reopening the door, the telegram has added another error by deliberately and finally shutting the door by telling me that he cannot see me under threat of the resumption of the Civil Disobedience movement, and introducing in the telegram the argument that is not germane to my repeated request for an interview. The Viceroy and his Government have committed a *flagrant breach of the Delhi Pact* by using the so-called threat of resumption of civil disobedience as *an excuse* for refusing to see me. Surely he must know that the negotiations which resulted in the settlement were being carried on although the civil disobedience was still on, and under the Settlement it was never finally given up, but was only discontinued for the purpose of securing the representation of the Congress at the Round Table Conference; it being understood that it was likely to be resumed if the Round Table Conference failed to give satisfaction in respect of the national demand. To this I wish to add the second settlement that was arrived at, at Simla immediately prior to my departure for London. On looking again at the correspondence that passed between the Government and myself, it would be found that notwithstanding the Truce I had reserved to myself the right to take up civil disobedience by way of defensive action in connection with grievances about which relief might be unattainable through milder methods. Surely if the civil disobedience was such a heinous crime, the Government could never have exchanged correspondence on that basis and sent me to London with viceregal blessings. But I see with the change of times that manners have also changed" (Appendix I, 4).

Even at this late hour, however, a deputation of the Welfare of India League, which contained two Europeans, sent a wire to the Viceroy that Mahatma Gandhi had an entirely open mind, and that it was all the more necessary that he should have an opportunity of discussing the situation, but there was no reply. The Mahatma had an open mind. The

Viceroy had not. Government had determined on war. The promulgation of the Frontier Ordinance was the decisive step. From that day Government had no intention of going back. This was their supreme opportunity of breaking the power of the Congress for ever. To do so they must force the pace, manœuvre themselves into a strategic position and strike swiftly and hard. This they did, with what result we know.

The importance of this long history cannot be over-emphasized. The "Firm Hand" in India is not being used to maintain law and order; it is a deliberate attempt to stifle the growing political life of the country. Throughout Mr. Emerson's statement and the Viceroy's telegrams one fact is clearly evident. The conflict is one of *prestige*. The real crime of Congress is its success. Congress exploited the Settlement to add to its prestige and secure a position of privilege. It claimed to be a body whose advice must be taken. It aimed at establishing a parallel government. It presumed to think that Government's policy should be dependent on the Mahatma's judgment as to the necessity of the Ordinances.

But however this may be, at the very least, as the Mahatma pointed out, "Any popular and constitutional Government would always welcome and sympathetically consider suggestions made by public bodies and their representatives, and assist them with all available information about their acts or ordinances of which public opinion may disapprove." And surely the way to deal with such a body is not to antagonize it, but to win its friendship. If you cannot compete with your rival, you are not justified in shooting him. The proper method is not to govern more, but to govern better.



## IV

### INDIA AND BRITAIN

#### THE "FIRM HAND"

"The firm hand," writes the *Daily Mail*, "is the most effective argument, and the one quickest understood in the East." In French Indo-China or the Dutch East Indies the Congress would not have been tolerated for a moment either by the French or the Dutch, "who appreciate the wisdom of firmness in handling their responsibilities." And many others, who by no means share the politics of the *Daily Mail*, consider that in adopting a policy of severe repression, the long-suffering Government of India was only doing what any Government would do. Our objection to this plea is that Great Britain has no business to be doing what *any* Government would do. For hundreds of years Britain has stood for freedom. "Britons have ever fought well for their country," wrote the late Poet-Laureate, "and their country's cause is the high cause of Freedom and Honour—that fairest earthly fame, the fame of freedom, is inseparable from the names of Albion, Britain, England; it has gone out to America and the Antipodes, hallowing the names of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand; it has found a new home in Africa; and this heritage is our glory and happiness." Our country has sent missionaries to India with their gospel of truth and freedom. We fought the slave trade; we claim that in 1914 we fought for the freedom of the world; no poets have sung more eloquently of freedom than ours. We have claimed not only to be free ourselves, but to be the champions of liberty for others.

Everyone deplors that to-day in India—we, the champions of liberty, have turned a sub-continent into a vast prison-house; we have abolished that liberty of the Press for which our own Milton once pleaded trumpet-tongued; we are endeavouring to degrade by relentless and even vindictive imprisonment thousands of men and women whose only

crime is love of their own country and the desire to see her free. We have got to govern, we say at the best, in the interests of the country as a whole. But that is just the question. Why have *we* got to govern? What moral right have we to govern a country that so clearly does not want our government? If we can only govern India by betraying those very principles on which our own free commonwealth is based, surely it is an indication that we ought not to govern her any more. Where is the moral right to govern if you can only govern by imprisoning thousands of men and women of the most fearless integrity and highest moral stature? Devoted social workers, women of high birth, who have given their lives to fighting public evils, labourers in the cause of khadi or for the uplift of the aboriginal tribes, ascetics, scholars, poets, philosophers, doctors, great merchants, millionaires, men from Oxford and Cambridge, men who have themselves been judges, thousands of honest, simple peasants—men and women, Mussalmans, Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, Brahmins, and “untouchables”—one great family—are to-day crowded in the jails of India. Where in recent history have we seen the like, outside Russia?

But, apart from immorality and injustice, is the present repression in India even good strategy? Is the Firm Hand really understood in the East? Is not this repression simply going to create a heritage of bitterness which years of conciliation will not remove? Let us be clear as to what the Firm Hand really means. The promulgation of the Ordinances, which have been extended to all parts of India, has given officials almost unlimited powers over the public. Every Congress leader of note was immediately arrested, and soon thousands of the rank and file followed their leaders to the jails. The circumstances of the arrests have lowered Britain's reputation for justice, fair play, or common decency. Hundreds of arrests are made simply on suspicion. In such cases, after being detained in prison for fifteen to twenty days, the prisoners (many of them men and women of the highest position) are released under the humiliating condition of having to report to the police once or twice a day. Breach of this condition leads to further imprisonment, usually rigorous imprison-

ment for two years with fine. A man therefore will receive two years' imprisonment simply on suspicion. "The Government," said Sir Hari Singh Gour<sup>1</sup> in the Legislative Assembly, "had indemnified under the Ordinances the actions of officials even before actions were taken, so that the subjects had no remedy and could not seek relief. Without any charge or evidence persons could be detained and their property and funds confiscated and parents punished for the crimes of their children. . . . However much we may disapprove of the activities of Congressmen, we claim that even a prisoner in the dock is entitled to fair play. Under these Ordinances the liberty of the entire peaceful community is in jeopardy." No one can tell who next is to be imprisoned. A speaker in the Assembly said that the present state of affairs reminded him of the story of a colonel in Central Africa who had received a telegram: "War declared. Arrest all aliens." He accordingly arrested all, and replied: "Arrested Germans, Italians, Belgians, etc. Please inform against whom war has been declared." The essential arbitrariness of official action has recently been made clear beyond question. Persons of good position who have been detained for a few weeks are released and simultaneously served with a notice to report themselves at a time five minutes after their release. To most of us it would appear a sensible countermove for the suspect to wait a few minutes to report, and so earn at least a few hours' freedom. But Congressmen regard it as a matter of principle not to report, but to accept the full consequences of breaking the orders of a corrupt Government. The consequences are immediate re-arrest and a long sentence, in some cases two years' imprisonment. In this way the form of the law is observed, but can anyone assert that this is not a form of disrespect for law even more insidiously harmful than that for which Congress is officially accused? This is surely "cat-and-mouse" treatment at its worst.

There have been attempts to cow the people by parades of military force and aircraft, both in towns and villages. There have been many cases of shooting in which innocent

<sup>1</sup> An independent nationalist and social reformer.

people have been killed. The lathi has been freely used, especially to disperse peaceful meetings and processions, and sometimes with great brutality. In Madras a man has been beaten to death. Red Cross volunteers, and even nurses, have been beaten while rendering first aid to the wounded. Unconscious men lying on the ground have been savagely kicked, young boys have been stripped and whipped in the open court. For such things there is no possibility of redress. A wholesale ban on meetings has sought to suppress any expression of popular opinion, and even ordinary criticism of Government. Nobody can trust his newspaper. An editor who dares to tell the truth may immediately be arrested and imprisoned without trial. The post and telegraph services are in the hands of the police. Private letters, as well as Press telegrams, are controlled. Papers of every kind (even parish magazines) have been warned not to print matter reflecting adversely on Government or even to publish photographs of nationalist leaders or the names of persons arrested. (The restriction as to names was later withdrawn, as it became a matter for ridicule.) In many cases security has been demanded and presses have been seized. The Ordinances are being administered in the most provocative spirit. The Congress flag is often torn down and insulted, and the Union Jack hoisted in its place. The mere sale of khadi is sufficient to earn a thrashing. The Congress Hospital at Allahabad was forcibly closed down by the authorities, and a distinguished medical missionary who was investigating the possibility of opening a hospital in Madras was mercilessly beaten by the police. Congress funds have been confiscated and money has been taken from private accounts under suspicion that it would be used for Congress purposes. Unscrupulous propaganda has been carried on in Government communiqués, in the statements of Directors of Information, and in the Anglo-Indian Press. Congress leaders are vilified and their aims misrepresented; information is suppressed (especially in the communiqués from the North-West Frontier Province). There is an attempt to terrorize the people, in the treatment of *détenus* in the lock-up and by throwing the public into

a state of insecurity by prohibitions against the giving of food, accommodation, or transport to Congress workers. Houses and institutions are searched on the slightest excuse. Notices restraining movements are frequently served both on private individuals and on the heads of public institutions. Business is being interfered with by firms being warned not to deal with Congress workers, and now shopkeepers have begun to be arrested for closing their shops on special days as a mark of their protest against the repressive measures of the Government.

Sir Abdur Rahim did not exaggerate when he declared in the Assembly: "I maintain that the scope of the Ordinance is to deprive everyone of every vestige of right—right of personal safety, right to liberty, right to property, right to association, and every right that a human being may possess, and who is the Indian with the least self-respect who can tell the Government, 'We have confidence in you, and what you have done is right'? Is this how you are preparing India for swaraj, for Dominion Status, by taking even the little freedom we enjoy? I have denounced many activities of the Congress without reserve, but that is not the question. You are depriving an entire people of their elementary and fundamental rights." And Pandit Malaviya was right in laying the burden of disturbing law and order at the door, not of Congress, but of Government: "You have promoted neither peace nor good government by the measures you have adopted. On the contrary, you have woefully disturbed law and order and public tranquillity."

These are not the opinions of extremist Congressmen. Men like Sir Hari Singh Gour and Sir Abdur Rahim have always tried to cooperate with Government. Their protests are symptomatic of the tide of indignation which is sweeping through the country, and driving into opposition many of Government's former friends.

#### THE FUTURE OF INDO-BRITISH RELATIONS

The real tragedy of the present situation, said a Congress leader to me shortly after Mahatma Gandhi's arrest, lies in

its probable effects on the future of Indo-British relations. And he added, "You can make us obey you, but you cannot make us love you. You cannot force us to buy your goods. Thousands of us will never again purchase in the British market." I know personally scores of men and women, now in prison, who would normally turn in love and gratitude to Britain, whence they have drawn so much of their culture and inspiration. But they will never do so now. The strength of the feeling in India (which is so minimized in official reports) is not fully appreciated in the West. A missionary of long experience writing in Poona of the "underground sullen alienation of the thinking part of India" says, "Never, in our opinion, was the alienation between Government and the majority of educated people in India so near complete as it is at the present moment. The very calmness with which the series of Ordinances has been received, as compared with the outbreak in several places in 1919, is itself disquieting, because it is in danger of giving the impression to Government that their swift and intensive methods of justice have succeeded, and because there is so much evidence that the alienation lies deep in the minds of people who are not speaking for fear of being suspected." And the Welfare of India League deputation to the Governor of Bombay, to which we have already referred, declares that "we view with great anxiety the passions which have been engendered in this struggle, and in particular the grave racial antagonism with which we are threatened."

Mr. John Kellas, a missionary in Calcutta, writes in the *Guardian*—a weekly Christian paper published in Calcutta:

"It has taken many of us some time to become accustomed to the change in the political scene in India. . . . The first month of 1932 has seen the end of all negotiation and discussion, so far as Government and Congress are concerned, and the renewal of open war between them. . . . Sympathetic Britons may well consider whether the 1931 Ordinances were justifiable (the 1932 Ordinances are simply acts of war and justifiable by the ordinary canons of war), whether they have been successful for the purposes for which they were

intended and whether from the point of view of statesmanship they were worth the trouble they were certain to precipitate. It may very well be argued that it would have been the higher wisdom for Congress to have swallowed the Ordinances, in the sure expectation that even the constitution which emerged from the Round Table Conferences would see the end of them for ever. It appears that Mr. Gandhi was prepared to consider the 'revision' of the Ordinances. There is indication that he at least was willing to look for a compromise. But the Government would permit no compromise.

"My own opinion is quite definite, that the limited success which the Ordinances have had in intimidating terrorists and in restoring order in disturbed areas is altogether outweighed in importance for the public good by the wide and deep resentment which the execution of them has caused.

"Argument about the Ordinances must lead to a study of conditions in three provinces—Bengal, the United Provinces, and the North-West Frontier Province—during 1931. The Bengal Ordinance (No. 11 of 1931, issued on November 30th) was meant for the suppression of terrorism. It is extremely unfortunate that the measures against terrorism were not taken as a result of conference between Government and representatives of the public. Grave mutual distrust and unwillingness to confer made this impossible. The pressure exerted on Government by the (so-called) European Association was in this case unusually harmful. On the other hand, the attitude of some of the most influential popular leaders, especially the outrageous resolutions eulogizing the motives of murderers, made it extremely difficult for the desirable contacts to be established. True statesmanship would have overcome these obstacles, but statesmanship was not allowed to prevail. Reports of happenings at Midnapore, Hijli, Chittagong, and Dacca darkened the counsels of men, and made cooperation in fighting what was regarded as a general menace all but impossible. So it was that, while enthusiasts were thinking that the London Conference was producing a solution of our difficulties, Government had resort to measures

of its own which outshadowed in the public mind all the deliberations of the Conference.

"Much more evidence needs to be adduced about the conditions in the United Provinces before ordinary men can be satisfied as to the responsibility for the trouble in that area. It must be recognized that the economic conditions of the ryots in that Province are extremely deplorable. No recriminations, no questions of prestige, ought to be allowed to prevent a full inquiry into these conditions. Will public opinion in favour of such an inquiry not prevail?

"I do not pretend to sufficient knowledge of the North-West Frontier Province to pass any opinion on the unfortunate happenings there. But I have said enough to show that at least for one Britisher (that horrid word) the case for the Ordinance is not clear. There is belief in India that there is complete unanimity among Europeans in India in favour of the present policy of the Government. It would be strange if it were so. British people at home are not given to unanimity, not even in support of a 'national' Government. There is more difference of opinion than is commonly supposed.

"The British mercantile community are so divorced from the common life of the country that they have seldom the means to form unbiased judgments. The most important European newspaper in Bengal has apparently surrendered its soul to the 'European' Association. But there is a large non-vocal section, and among these are missionaries who for the sake of the cause which they have at heart are reluctant to take 'part in politics.' I make no pretension to speak for all this non-vocal section, but I speak for a not inconsiderable number.

"So far I have discussed the causes of the 'War' up to the last day of 1931. Up to that point I consider that both parties, Government and the Congress, were equally guilty of war mentality. But the first step in breaking off negotiations was taken by the Viceroy in his refusal to discuss the Ordinances with the leader of the Congress and the most representative of Indians. Not even Lord Irwin can exculpate Lord Willingdon for this great betrayal of peace. . . ."



Another well-known British missionary writes :—

“I feel that my people have now followed the example of Gandhi two years ago, when he deliberately picked a quarrel with the friendliest Viceroy and the friendliest British Government that India has ever known. I grant that by starting the non-cooperation campaign Gandhi has probably advanced the cause of India’s independence by a decade or two, and that had it not been for that campaign India would have got nothing whatsoever beyond the Simon Commission proposals. But not even political success can in my judgment justify that deliberate picking of a quarrel. This time my people have done it. Repression will surely succeed—for a time—it always does: vide Russia, Italy, Poland, Spain, Yugo-Slavia. But I regret more than I can say that Britain should have taken the initiative in sharply snapping off friendly relations with the one man who might conceivably have led Congress into better paths, and in refusing even an interview to the man to whom, as India’s first Premier, it is quite conceivable that in a few years’ time the Viceroy may have to hand over the reins of India’s government. And by this action we have gone very far towards the alienation of that large body of liberal and moderate opinion in India on whose support we must depend if we are to reach a friendly settlement. I admit that from the point of view of tactics the suddenness of Government’s blow has avoided great trouble for the moment, but we are purchasing the apparent calm of the moment at a calamitous price. Had we been willing to forgo that initial advantage and waited till Gandhi had named some impossible demands we should have had with us the conscience of thoughtful and moderate India. As it is I am afraid that by the line pursued with Gandhi we may have ended the British Raj, and that in ten years’ time self-governing India may leave the British Commonwealth to which Lord Irwin’s method of conciliation had gone far to bind her for ever.

“For the moment there is a deceptive calm. Deceptive it must be; for repression can have done nothing to conciliate the body of opinion in India that was hostile to Britain. It can only have driven it underground into the path of assassination

and conspiracy. The (often grave) abuses of police rule from which we are now suffering are inevitable once war is declared. I therefore pass over the examples which have come within my knowledge. They are shocking enough."

During the last three months I myself have travelled some ten thousand miles in India, staying almost entirely in Indian homes. Everywhere I found the same story—not only in Congress circles, but among peoples of every shade of political opinion and even among Indian officials and the police who watched my movements. There is no faith in Great Britain. No one—except the Mahatma—believes the declarations of our public men. There is a complete breakdown of normal psychological relationships between England and India. This great wrong that we have committed has eaten into the soul of India. Art, culture, religion are dwarfed into insignificance before the all-dominating passion for liberty. A medallist of the Bombay School of Art declined to receive his prize from the hands of the Governor at the recent prize-giving. "With great respect to your Excellency and to our Principal, I am ashamed to take part in this function, because the creed of the Congress does not allow me to do so . . .," he declared before he was stopped. To-day feeling is intensified. Even a cautious and moderate politician like Sir Cowasji Jehangir says of the present situation: "Believe me as one who will fight for the British connection to the end of my days, some provisions in these Ordinances are weakening the link and, if allowed to stand, will completely break the link between India and England."

One man stands out in the midst of this nation-wide despair and mistrust with his message of friendliness and hope. "I do not want to break the bond between England and India, but I do want to transform that bond." In his first speech at the Federal Structure Committee Mahatma Gandhi said: "India can be held by the sword: but what will conduce to the prosperity of Great Britain and the economic freedom of Great Britain? An enslaved but rebellious India, or an India an ~~en~~cerned partner with Britain to share her sorrows, to take part side by side with Britain in her misfortunes? Yes, if

need be, but at her own will, to fight side by side with Britain, not for the exploitation of a single race or a single human being on earth, but conceivably for the good of the whole world. . . . And so I said to myself whilst I was nearing the shores of your beautiful island: Perchance it might be possible for me to convince the British Ministers that India as a valuable partner, not held by force, but by the silken cord of love, an India of that character might be conceivably of real assistance to you in balancing your budget, not for one year, but for many. What cannot the two nations do—one a handful but brave, with a record for bravery perhaps unsurpassed, a nation noted for having fought slavery, a nation that has at least claimed times without number to protect the weak—and another a very ancient nation, counted in millions, with a glorious and ancient past, representing at the present moment two great cultures, the Islamic and the Hindu, and, if you will, also containing, not a small, but a very large number of Christian population, and certainly absorbing the whole of the splendid Zoroastrian stock. . . . I ask you whether an India free, completely independent as Great Britain is, whether an honourable partnership between these two cannot be mutually beneficial?"

A thrilling picture of the possibilities of cooperation. But this man, the greatest friend of Britain in the whole Eastern world, we imprison. In doing so, we hurt ourselves most of all. As things are, we need India in order to "balance our budget." We need her cooperation—to put things on a higher plane—in the realms of culture, art, and religion. We shall be infinitely the poorer if we drive India into being our enemy. But we shall do that unless we speedily change our policy. We shall leave behind scars that cannot be healed and memories which even a Mahatma will find hard to forgive.

### THE ONLY SOLUTION

The only solution is to grant India her claim. That is the only honourable way. Englishmen need have no fear that they will be betraying a trust. The real betrayal is the attempt to force our alien, unwanted, extravagant, irresponsible rule

upon India by the sword. In the present policy of repression there is the betrayal of honour, justice, fair play. "It is preposterous to suggest," says Mahatma Gandhi, "that British Government would be abdicating its function if it withdraws from India. The only function that it is fulfilling to-day is of exploiting India." This has become a general opinion in India, and something unequivocal has to be done if its baneful effects are to be counteracted. Can we not take a path undoubtedly respectful of honour and justice, instead of following a course that will only leave behind it a memory of tragedy and shame for us? And to what purpose? If it really be to make possible the drafting of a genuinely liberal constitution in the immediate future, it is possible we may recover what we are now losing. But no one in India can believe that the friendliness of England is so disinterested. The influence of some European business men is too clear in the actions of Government, shortsighted though the policy seem to be in the interests of the British as a nation. I give in full a comment of *The Servant of India* as it is of many-sided interest: "To those who are inclined to discount the influence of the unofficial European community in the formulation of the Government's policy, the proceedings of the general meeting of the Bombay Branch of the European Association held last week will serve as an eye-opener. The speech of the President describes the action taken by the Association with a view to induce Government to prepare themselves to cope with the situation that may be created by the possible revival of the civil disobedience movement. To this end it set to work as far back as September last when it waited in deputation on the Home Member of the Bombay Government and discussed with him the lines which Government action designed to suppress the civil disobedience movement should follow. At the request of the Home Member the Association in October last submitted its suggestions. In addition to a general plea for 'firm and, above all, prompt action,' the Association, we are told, urged among other things, (1) the prompt arrest of all the known leaders of the civil disobedience movement; (2) the seizure of funds intended to finance the movement; (3) the

vital necessity for more and better propaganda. Those who have been following recent events with any care need not be told how closely repressive action taken by Government to deal with the civil disobedience movement approximates to the suggestions put forward by the Bombay Europeans (Appendix VI). But let us be fair to them. They were never anxious that needless indignities should be heaped upon persons in any way involved in the movement, such, e.g., as those implied in their being ordered to report themselves to the police. This aspect of the Government's anti-Congress activity is apparently as distasteful to the Europeans as to anybody else. They therefore recently approached Government with a view to see if less humiliating methods for achieving the same end could not be devised. The answer of Government is an emphatic 'No.' "

If it be that we are being led into postponing for merely a few years more or less an end that is inevitable (when we shall have been elbowed out of India), this may indeed be in the interests of a few individuals; but what a failure of what we have striven for as a nation! Having clung too long to prestige, we have lost it; having put the concerns of trade too high, we have prepared for its collapse because we have earned for ourselves the epithet "exploiters"; and also "heartless" in that we have too easily condemned countless noble-hearted men and women to suffering and humiliation unimaginable.

The only solution is to grant India her claim. If it be asked, What steps should be immediately taken to this end, it might be sufficient to answer that, once the will has been created in England and in her governors, the way can quickly be found. It is the will that matters. But let it be admitted that, once a conflict like that now raging in India has been started, once a policy of Ordinances has been inaugurated, it is not easy to find a dignified withdrawal. It is not dignity or prestige that matters, however. What does matter is to release India from her bonds, and that speedily.

It is not really difficult. The key to the solution of the whole problem lies with Mahatma Gandhi, if we will but let him use it. He, and he alone, can "deliver the goods." We know

his terms. They are not difficult. If we are prepared to deal out true justice to all those who are now suffering injustice; if we are prepared to hand over the solution of India's problems to her elected, not selected, spokesmen; if we have no mental reservations about "reserved powers"—as soon as we are ready for these things we can ask Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues to come out of jail, and the rest will be easy. This does not mean a base surrender, but an honest change of heart. Until we have made up our minds to these things, it is no use trying to parley. Nothing will break the spirit of the people of India. There is no other way but to give way. But to do that England must open her eyes and face the truth. This unwillingness to face the truth is the greatest barrier to free and friendly relations between India and England. What Mahatma Gandhi writes of the difficulties of British Ministers in dealing with India holds true of the general public also. "It would be wrong to think that the British Ministers are humbugs and that they do not mean what they say. I have come away with the impression that they are honest in their professions but they are labouring under a heavy handicap. . . . Their greatest handicap is in their being spoon-fed on one-sided and often hopelessly false statements and anti-nationalist opinions received by them from their agents in India ever since the commencement of the British Raj. For the Ministers this information is generally gospel truth. They, therefore, believe us to be incapable of handling our own defence and finance, they believe that the presence of British troops and British civilians is necessary for the well-being of India. Perhaps there is no nation on earth equal to the British in capacity for self-deception."

Unless we recognize and cure that self-deception we may by our treatment of India imperil the peace of the whole world; we shall certainly do irreparable harm to our own country. It is in that belief that this pamphlet has been written. It has been written out of a deep sense of loyalty. For the true loyalty does not mean "My country right or wrong." It means an adherence to those spiritual principles which have made my country great. I yield to none in my love for England.

I love every acre of her lovely countryside. I am proud of her history and her achievement. I believe in her future mission to the world. But she will never fulfil her mission whilst her hands are stained by a great sin, even though unintended, against a weaker nation. Her true greatness lies in the service of mankind, but she can never give that service so long as the spirit of imperialism reigns in her heart instead of that of human brotherhood. To say these things is not to be a traitor or a renegade; it is the highest patriotism. No! the self-satisfaction of patriotism is not enough, and love of men as men must be in very deed the setting for the special love of our own nation. The same spirit which made us fight for liberty in Europe in 1914 should cause us to allow liberty in India to-day.

## APPENDIX I

### THE WILLINGDON-GANDHI CORRESPONDENCE

#### 1. GANDHI'S FIRST TELEGRAM TO THE VICEROY

I was unprepared on landing yesterday to find Frontier and United Provinces Ordinances, shootings in Frontier and arrests of valued comrades in both on top of Bengal Ordinance awaiting me. I do not know whether I am to regard these as an indication that friendly relations between us are closed or whether you expect me still to see you and receive guidance from you as to the course I am to pursue in advising Congress. I would esteem wire in reply.

#### 2. VICEROY'S REPLY

His Excellency desires me to thank you for your telegram of the 29th instant, in which you refer to Bengal and United Provinces and North-West Frontier Province Ordinances. In regard to Bengal it has been and is necessary for Government to take all possible measures to prevent dastardly assassination of their officers and of private citizens.

His Excellency wishes me to say that he and his Government desire to have friendly relations with all political parties and with all sections of the public, and in particular to securing cooperation of all in great work of constitutional reforms which they are determined to push forward with minimum delay. Cooperation, however, must be mutual and His Excellency and his Government cannot reconcile activities of Congress in United Provinces and North-West Frontier Province with the spirit of frank cooperation which the good of India demands.

As regards the United Provinces, you are doubtless aware that while the local Government were engaged in devising means to give all possible relief in the existing situation the Provincial Congress Committee authorized a no-rent campaign which is now being vigorously pursued by the Congress



organizations in that province. This action on the part of the Congress bodies has compelled Government to take measures to prevent a general state of disorder and spreading of class and communal hatred which the campaign, if continued unchecked, would inevitably involve.

In the North-West Frontier Province, Abdul Ghaffar Khan and bodies he controlled have continuously engaged in activities against Government and in fomenting racial hatred. He and his friends have persistently refused all overtures by the Chief Commissioner to secure their cooperation and, rejecting declaration of the Prime Minister, have declared in favour of complete independence. Abdul Ghaffar Khan has delivered numerous speeches open to no other construction than as incitement to revolution and his adherents have attempted to stir trouble in the tribal areas. The Chief Commissioner, with the approval of His Excellency's Government, has shown utmost forbearance and to the last moment continued his efforts to secure assistance of Abdul Ghaffar in carrying into effect, with the least possible delay, intentions of His Majesty's Government regarding constitutional reforms in the province. Government refrained from taking special measures until the activities of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his associates and, in particular, the open and intensive preparation for an early conflict with Government, created a situation of such grave menace to peace of the province and of the tribal areas as to make it impossible further to delay action. His Excellency understands that Abdul Ghaffar Khan was in August last made responsible for leading Congress movement in the province and that the volunteer organizations he controlled were specifically recognized by All-India Congress Committee as Congress organizations. His Excellency desires me to make it clear that his responsibilities for peace and order make it impossible for him to have any dealing with persons or organizations upon whom rest the responsibility for activities above outlined. You have yourself been absent from India on business of the Round Table Conference and in the light of the attitude which you have observed there His Excellency is unwilling to believe that you have

personally any share in the responsibility for or that you approve of the recent activities of Congress in the United Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province. If this is so, he is willing to see you and to give you his views as to way in which you can best exert your influence to maintain the spirit of cooperation which animated the proceedings of the Round Table Conference. But His Excellency feels bound to emphasize that he will not be prepared to discuss with you measures which Government of India, with the full approval of His Majesty's Government, have found it necessary to adopt in Bengal, the United Provinces, and the North-West Frontier Province. These measures must in any case be kept in force until they have served the purpose for which they were imposed, namely, preservation of law and order essential to good government. On receipt of your reply His Excellency proposes to publish this correspondence.

### 3. GANDHI'S SECOND TELEGRAM

I thank His Excellency for the wire in reply to mine of 29th instant. It grieves me, for His Excellency has rejected in a manner hardly befitting his high position an advance made in the friendliest spirit. I had approached as a seeker wanting light on questions in which I desired to understand Government version of very serious and extraordinary measures to which I made reference. Instead of appreciating my advance His Excellency has rejected it by asking me to repudiate my valued colleagues in advance by telling me that even if I became guilty of such dishonourable conduct and sought an interview I could not even discuss these matters of vital importance to the nation. In my opinion, the constitutional issue dwindles into insignificance in the face of Ordinances and acts which must, if not met with stubborn resistance, result in utter demoralization of nation. I hope no self-respecting Indian will run risk of killing national spirit for doubtful contingency of securing a constitution, to work which no nation with stamina may be left. Let me also point out that as to Frontier Province your telegram contains a narration of facts which on face of them furnish no warrant for

arrests of popular leaders, passing of extra-legal Ordinance making life and property utterly insecure, and shooting unarmed peaceful crowds for daring to demonstrate against arrests of their trusted leaders. If Khan Saheb Abdul Ghaffar asserted right to complete independence it was a natural claim and a claim made with impunity by Congress at Lahore in 1929 and by me with energy put before British Government in London. Moreover, let me remind the Viceroy that despite the knowledge on the part of Government that Congress mandate contained such a claim, I was invited to attend London Conference as the Congress delegate. Nor am I able to detect in a mere refusal to attend the Durbar a crime warranting summary imprisonment. If Khan Saheb was fomenting racial hatred it was undoubtedly regrettable. I have his own declarations to the contrary made to me, but assuming that he did foment racial hatred he was entitled to an open trial where he could have defended himself against the accusation. Regarding the United Provinces, His Excellency is surely misinformed, because there was no no-rent campaign authorized by Congress, but whilst negotiations were proceeding between the Government and the Congress representatives the time for collecting of rents actually arrived and rents began to be demanded freely. Congressmen were, therefore, obliged to advise tenants to suspend payment pending the result of negotiations, and Mr. Sherwani had offered on behalf of the Congress to withdraw this advice if the authorities on their own initiative suspended collections pending negotiations. I venture to suggest that this is not a matter which can be so summarily dismissed as your wire has done. The controversy in the United Provinces is of long standing and involves the well-being of millions of a peasantry known to be economically ground down. Any Government jealous of the welfare of the masses in its charge would welcome voluntary cooperation of a body like the Congress, which admittedly exercises great influence over the masses and whose ambition is to serve them faithfully, and let me add that I regard the withholding of payment of taxes as an inalienable ancient and natural right of a people who have exhausted all other means of seeking

freedom from an unbearable economic burden. I must repudiate the suggestion that the Congress has the slightest desire to promote disorder in any shape or form. As to Bengal, the Congress is at one with the Government in condemning assassinations and would heartily cooperate with Government in any measures that may be found necessary to stamp out such crimes, but whilst Congress would condemn in unmeasured terms methods of terrorism it can in no way associate itself with Government terrorism as is betrayed by the Bengal Ordinance and the acts done thereunder, but must resist within limits of its prescribed creed of non-violence such measures of legalized Government terrorism. I heartily assent to the proposition laid down in your telegram that cooperation must be mutual. But your telegram leads me irresistibly to the conclusion that His Excellency demands cooperation from the Congress without returning any on behalf of Government. I can read in no other way his peremptory refusal to discuss these matters which as I have endeavoured to show have at least two sides. The popular side I have put as I understand it, but before committing myself to a definite judgment I was anxious to understand the other—that is, the Government side—and then tender my advice to the Congress. With reference to the last paragraph of your telegram I may not repudiate moral liability for the actions of my colleagues whether in the Frontier Province or United Provinces, but I confess that I was ignorant of the detailed actions and activities of my colleagues whilst I was absent from India, and it was because it was necessary for me to advise and guide the Working Committee of the Congress and in order to complete my knowledge I sought with an open mind with the best of intentions an interview with His Excellency and deliberately asked for his guidance. I cannot conceal from His Excellency my opinion that the reply he has condescended to send was hardly a return for my friendly and well-meant approach. And, if it is not yet too late, I would ask His Excellency to reconsider his decision and see me as a friend without imposing any conditions whatsoever as to the scope or subject of discussion, and I, on my part, can promise that

I will study with an open mind all the facts that he might put before me. I would unhesitatingly and willingly go to the respective Provinces and with the aid of the authorities study both sides of the question and if I come to the conclusion after such a study that the people were in the wrong and that the Working Committee, including myself, were misled as to the correct position and that the Government was right, I should have no hesitation whatsoever in making that open confession and guiding the Congress accordingly. Along with my desire and willingness to cooperate with the Government I must put my limitations before His Excellency. Non-violence is my absolute creed. I believe in civil disobedience as not only the natural right of a people, especially when they have no effective voice in their own government, I regard it also as an effective substitute for violence or armed rebellion. I can never therefore deny my creed. In pursuance thereof and on the strength of uncontradicted reports supported by recent activities of the Government of India to the effect that there may be no other opportunity for me to guide the public, the Working Committee has accepted my advice and passed a resolution tentatively sketching a plan of civil disobedience. I am sending herewith a text of the resolution. If His Excellency thinks it worth while to see me pending discussion, operation of the resolution will be suspended in the hope that discussions may result in the resolutions being finally given up. I admit that correspondence between His Excellency and myself is of such grave importance as not to brook delay in publication. I am, therefore, sending my telegram, your reply, this rejoinder, and the Working Committee's resolution for publication.

#### 4. RESOLUTION OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE

The Working Committee has heard Mahatma Gandhi's account of his visit to the West and considered the situation created by the extraordinary Ordinances promulgated in Bengal, United Provinces, and the Frontier Province, and by the actions of the authorities, including the numerous arrests made, among these of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Mr. Sher-

wani and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and by the shooting in the Frontier Province of innocent men, resulting in many deaths and many more being injured. The Working Committee has also seen the telegram from His Excellency the Viceroy in reply to the telegram sent by Mahatma Gandhi to him.

#### COOPERATION MADE IMPOSSIBLE

The Working Committee is of opinion that these several acts, and others of lesser gravity that have taken place in some other Provinces, and the telegram from His Excellency seem to make further cooperation with the Government on the part of the Congress utterly impossible unless the Government policy is radically changed; these acts and the telegram betray no intention on the part of bureaucracy to hand power to the people and are calculated to demoralize the nation. They also betray want of faith in the Congress from which cooperation is expected by the Government.

The Working Committee yields to no one in its abhorrence of terrorism, on any account whatsoever, resorted to by individuals such as was recently witnessed in Bengal, but it condemns with equal force terrorism practised by Government as evidenced by its recent acts and ordinances.

The Working Committee marks the deep national humiliation over the assassination committed by two girls in Comilla, and is firmly convinced that such crime does great harm to the nation, especially when, through its greatest political mouthpiece of the Congress, it is pledged to non-violence for achieving Swaraj.

#### BENGAL ORDINANCE NOT JUSTIFIED

But the Working Committee can see no justification whatsoever for the Bengal Ordinance which seeks to punish a whole people for the crime of a few. The real remedy lies in dealing with the known cause that prompts such crime.

If Bengal Ordinance has no justification for its existence, the Ordinances in the United Provinces and the Frontier Province have still less.

**UNITED PROVINCES GOVERNMENT ACTION NOT  
COVERED BY ORDINANCE**

The Working Committee is of opinion that the measures taken by the Congress in the United Provinces for obtaining agrarian relief are and can be shown to be justified. The Working Committee holds that it is the unquestionable right of all people suffering from grave economic distress, as the tenantry of the United Provinces is admittedly suffering, to withhold payment of rent if they fail, as in the United Provinces they have failed, to obtain redress by other constitutional methods. In the arrest and imprisonment of Mr. Sherwani, the President of the United Provinces Congress Committee, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Working General Secretary of the Congress, who were proceeding to Bombay to confer with Mahatma Gandhi and to take part in the meeting of the Working Committee, the Government have even gone beyond the limits contemplated by their Ordinance in that there was no question whatsoever of these gentlemen taking part at Bombay in a no-tax campaign in the United Provinces.

**GOVERNMENT'S INHUMAN ACTS IN NORTH-WEST  
FRONTIER PROVINCE**

So far as the Frontier Province is concerned, on the Government's own showing there appears to be no warrant for either the promulgation of the Ordinance or the arrest and imprisonment without trial of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his co-workers. The Working Committee regards the shootings in that province of innocent and unarmed men to be wanton and inhuman and congratulates the brave men of the Frontier upon their courage and endurance, and the Working Committee has no doubt that, if the brave people of the Frontier retain their non-violent spirit in spite of the gravest provocations, their blood and their sufferings would advance the cause of India's independence.

## IMPARTIAL PUBLIC INQUIRY ASKED FOR

The Working Committee calls upon the Government of India to institute a public and impartial inquiry into the events that have led up to the passing of these Ordinances, the necessity of superseding the ordinary courts of law and legislative machinery, and the necessity of the several acts committed thereunder and thereafter. If a proper inquiry is set up and all facilities are given to the Working Committee for the production of evidence it will be prepared to assist the inquiry by leading evidence before it.

## PRIME MINISTER'S DECLARATIONS UNSATISFACTORY

The Working Committee has considered the declaration of the Prime Minister made before the Round Table Conference and the debate in the Houses of Parliament and regards it as wholly unsatisfactory and inadequate in terms of the Congress demand, and places on record its opinion that nothing short of complete Independence, carrying full control over defence and external affairs and finance, with such safeguards as may be demonstrably necessary in the interests of the nation, can be regarded by the Congress as satisfactory.

The Working Committee notes that the British Government was not prepared at the Round Table to regard the Congress as the only political organization representing and entitled to speak and act on behalf of the nation as a whole without distinction of caste, creed, or colour. At the same time the Committee recognizes with sorrow that the communal harmony could not be attained at the said conference.

## AN INVITATION TO THE NATION

The Working Committee invites the nation, therefore, to make ceaseless effort to demonstrate the capacity of the Congress to represent the nation as a whole and promote atmosphere that would make a constitution framed on a purely national basis acceptable to the various communities composing the nation.



Meanwhile the Working Committee is prepared to tender cooperation to the Government provided His Excellency the Viceroy reconsiders his telegram, and adequate relief is granted in respect of the Ordinances and the acts, free scope is left to the Congress in any future negotiations and consultations to prosecute the Congress claim for complete Independence, and the administration of the country is carried on in consultation with popular representatives pending the attainment of such Independence.

The absence of any satisfactory response from the Government in terms of the foregoing paragraph, the Working Committee will regard as an indication on the part of the Government that it has reduced to nullity the Delhi Pact.

#### RULES FOR THE CAMPAIGN

In the event of a satisfactory response not forthcoming the Working Committee calls upon the nation to resume civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes, under the following conditions and illustrative heads :

1. No province or district or Tahsil or village is bound to take up civil disobedience unless the people thereof understand the non-violent nature of the struggle with all its implications and are ready to undergo sufferings involving loss of life and property.
2. Non-violence must be observed in thought, word, and deed in the face of gravest provocation, it being understood that the campaign is not one of seeking revenge or inflicting injuries on the oppressor, but it is one of converting him through self-suffering and self-purification.
3. Social boycott with the intention of inflicting injury to the Government officers, police, or anti-nationalists can never be undertaken and is wholly inconsistent with the spirit of non-violence.
4. It should be borne in mind that non-violent campaigns are independent of pecuniary assistance. Therefore there should be no hired volunteers, but their bare

maintenance and maintenance of the dependents of poor men and women who might have been imprisoned or killed is permissible wherever it is possible. The Working Committee, however, expects workers in the cause to continue the struggle even though they might have to suffer privations.

5. Boycott of all foreign cloth, whether British or of other country, is obligatory under all circumstances.
6. All Congressmen and women are expected to use hand-spun and handwoven khaddar to the exclusion of even cloth manufactured in the indigenous mills.
7. Picketing of liquor shops and foreign cloth shops should be vigorously conducted, chiefly by women, but always so as to ensure perfect non-violence.
8. Unlicensed manufacture and collections of salt should be resumed.
9. If processions and demonstrations are organized only those should join them who will stand lathi charges or bullets without moving from their respective places.
10. Even in non-violent war boycott of goods manufactured by the oppressor is perfectly lawful, inasmuch as it is never the duty of the victim to promote or retain commercial relations with the oppressor. Therefore boycott of British goods and concerns should be resumed and vigorously prosecuted.
11. Pure breach of non-moral laws and of laws and orders injurious to people wherever considered possible and advisable may be practised.
12. All unjust orders issued under an Ordinance may be civilly disobeyed.

#### 5. THE VICEROY'S SECOND TELEGRAM

Your telegram of January 1st has been considered by His Excellency the Viceroy and his Government. They much regret to observe that under your advice the Congress Working Committee has passed a resolution which involves the general revival of civil disobedience in India unless certain conditions

are satisfied which are stated in your telegram and the resolution. His Excellency and his Government regard the attitude as the more deplorable in view of the declared intentions of His Majesty's Government and the Government of India to expedite the policy of constitutional reform contained in the Premier's statement.

No Government consistent with the discharge of its responsibility can be subject to any condition sought to be imposed under the menace of unlawful action by any political organization, nor can the Government of India accept the position, implied in your telegram, that its policy should be dependent on the judgment of yourself as to necessity of the measures which the Government has taken after the most careful and thorough consideration of the Pact and after all other possible remedies had been exhausted.

His Excellency and the Government can hardly believe that you or the Working Committee contemplate that His Excellency can invite you with the hope of any advantage to an interview held under the threat of the resumption of civil disobedience. His Excellency and his Government must hold you and the Congress responsible for all the consequences which may ensue for the action which the Congress have announced their intention of taking and to meet which the Government will take all necessary measures.

#### 6. GANDHI'S FINAL TELEGRAM

*to which there was no reply*

Thanks for your wire of even date. I cannot help expressing deep regret for the decision of His Excellency and his Government. Surely it is wrong to describe an honest expression of opinion as a threat. May I remind the Government that the Delhi negotiations were opened and carried on whilst civil disobedience was on and that when the Pact was made civil disobedience was not given up but only discontinued. This position was reasserted and accepted by His Excellency and his Government in Simla in September last prior to my departure for London. Although I had made it clear that

under certain circumstances the Congress might have to resume civil disobedience, the Government did not break off negotiations. That it was made clear by the Government that civil disobedience carried with it the penalty for disobedience merely proves what civil resisters bargain for but does not in any way affect my argument. Had the Government resented that attitude it was open to them not to send me to London. On the contrary, my departure had His Excellency's blessings.

Nor is it fair or correct to suggest that I have ever advanced the claim that any policy of the Government should be dependent on my judgment. But I do submit that any popular and constitutional Government would always welcome and sympathetically consider suggestions made by public bodies and their representatives and assist them with all available information about their Acts or Ordinances of which public opinion may disapprove. I claim that my messages have no other meaning. Time alone will show whose position was justified.

Meanwhile I wish to assure the Government that every endeavour will be made on the part of the Congress to carry on the struggle without malice and in a strictly non-violent manner. It was hardly necessary to remind me that the Congress and I, its humble representative, are responsible for all the consequences of our actions.

## APPENDIX II

### THE APOLOGIA OF GOVERNMENT

#### GOVERNMENT AND CONGRESS

##### WHY CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE CANNOT BE PERMITTED

THE Government of India desire at the present crisis to place before the public the issues raised by the attitude of Congress and their declared intention to launch a general campaign of civil disobedience. It is the policy of His Majesty's Government and the Government of India to secure, in the framing of a constitution for India, the maximum cooperation and agreement of all parties and interests in England and in India, and it was with this object that the procedure by Conference was adopted. In December 1929 the Congress deliberately rejected this method in favour of the barren road of non-cooperation, and a few months later they initiated the campaign of civil disobedience. The consequent loss of life and property, and the damage caused to business and trade, are fresh in the memory of the public. The movement continued until the beginning of March 1931, by which time, owing partly to the measures taken to meet it and partly to the steadily decreasing support of the public, it had ceased to be a cause of anxiety to Government. In the meantime, the Prime Minister had made his declaration of January 19, 1931, and the Government of India, with the approval of His Majesty's Government, decided to make a further effort to secure the cooperation of the Congress in bringing to fruition the policy which he had announced. The result was the Delhi Settlement of March 5, 1931. The primary object of that Settlement was to give to Congress the opportunity of participation in the further discussions of the Round Table Conference, and through the anxious months that followed the Government of India kept that purpose steadfastly in view. They and the local Government scrupulously observed the terms of the Settlement, and spared no effort to surmount the difficulties

which the activities of Congress continuously placed in the way of the establishment of peaceful conditions. Some of those difficulties have been described in the statements issued by the Government of the United Provinces, on December 14, 1931, and by the Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province on December 24 and 30, 1931, but they were not confined to those provinces. They were evident in varying degrees in every province and the Government of India have on record many instances of specific breaches of the Delhi Settlement. It is, however, more to the general trend of Congress policy than to individual cases that they now wish to refer. Within a few days of the Delhi Settlement, two features became manifest, and have since been continuously in evidence. The first was the organized attempt to utilize the Settlement as a means of preparation for a further conflict. The second was the exploitation of the Settlement for the purpose of adding to the prestige of Congress and of securing for them and its members a position of privilege, not enjoyed by any other organization or by members of the general public. Preparations for a renewal of civil disobedience have been openly carried on. Their excuse has been the assumed futility of the Round Table Conference and the bad faith of British statesmen. Allegations to this effect have continuously been made by the Congress Press and by responsible Congress leaders. There has been no disposition to await events or to show a spirit of confidence without which true cooperation was impossible. Behind the screen of distrust so created, the Congress have conducted preparations for a new campaign. They have laid particular stress on the consolidation of their position in rural areas, and in every province they have missed no opportunity to exploit the economic situation for that purpose. They have extended their volunteer organizations, and in the North-West Frontier Province they raised through Abdul Ghaffar Khan (who was recognized by the All-India Congress Committee as the leader of the Congress movement in that Province) a very large body of men who were trained in expectation of a struggle with Government. The dangers of this "war mentality" were evident to

Government, and Congress could not have been ignorant of them. They were, in fact, brought to the notice of Mr. Gandhi on several occasions, and, in particular, the menace to the Delhi Settlement, involved in the Red Shirt movement in the North-West Frontier Province and the agrarian agitation in the United Provinces, was strongly represented to him. While the Round Table Conference was still in session, a no-rent campaign was started in the United Provinces. A little later, preparations for a conflict in the North-West Frontier Province were so intensified as to create a situation of grave danger, to meet which Government were compelled to abandon the policy of forbearance which they had hitherto pursued.

1. The exploitation of the Settlement for the purpose of securing to the Congress a privileged position has taken various forms. During the months that followed the Delhi Settlement, the Government of India had persistently to contest claims the acceptance of which would have involved one or other of the following consequences:—

- (a) Fettering their own discretion and that of local Governments in the discharge of their responsibilities for the maintenance of law and order.
- (b) Placing members of the Congress who offended against the law in a favourable position in comparison with other members of the public in similar circumstances.
- (c) The recognition of Congress as a body whose advice must be accepted in matters relating to land revenue and rent.
- (d) Generally, the acceptance of the principle that the Settlement of March 5th gave to Congress a status which entitled it to more favourable treatment than is accorded by Government to any other association—political or otherwise—and constituted it an intermediary between the Government and the people.

Side by side with this intervention in the administration of the country, the Congress have in various ways interfered with private liberty and the freedom of trade. Under the guise of peaceful persuasion, they have employed the methods of intimi-

dation and coercion to impose on individuals and concerns an intolerable system of tyranny.

2. In their determination to assist towards the peaceful solution of constitutional problems, the Government of India showed deliberate forbearance towards Congress activities. They refrained from denouncing the Delhi Settlement, although justification for such a course was given on many occasions, and they persisted with success in their endeavours to obtain a *modus vivendi* which would enable Mr. Gandhi to attend the Round Table Conference. In the Statement delivered on December 1st last, the Prime Minister renewed the pledges he had given in the previous January. In one direction he made an important advance. He gave an assurance that, with due regard to the necessary requirements of the Frontier, the North-West Frontier Province would be constituted a Governor's Province of the same status as other Governors' Provinces, and he further announced that, pending the introduction of the new constitution in other Provinces, necessary steps would be taken, as soon as may be, to apply to the Province the provisions of the present Government of India Act relating to Governors' Provinces. This declaration was made with the full support of the Government of India and is an earnest of the good faith with which they have approached and will continue to approach the question of constitutional advance. A few days after the declaration of the Prime Minister, Parliament by an overwhelming majority accepted the policy which the National Government had announced. Among other commitments was the undertaking to expedite the scheme of constitutional advance, and to this end to set up various Committees to deal with specific aspects of the problem. In pursuance of this pledge, the Committees are now in course of constitution and the representatives of British parties will sail for India on January 15th. The Government of India, on their part, are doing all that is possible to push forward the work. In particular, they are taking steps which, they believe, will secure for the North-West Frontier Province within a few months the present status of a Governor's Province.

3. The position when Mr. Gandhi returned to India was thus



briefly as follows. His Majesty's Government and Parliament were committed to a scheme of constitutional reform which had been accepted as reasonable by the great majority of Delegates to the Round Table Conference. They had further given an undertaking that they would make every effort to overcome as quickly as possible the practical difficulties in the way of its immediate realization and, in pursuance of this, they had set up the machinery by which some of those difficulties can be solved. The Government of India were pledged to assist and expedite the work by all means in their power. Mr. Gandhi had given no clear indication of whether he or the Congress, whom he represented, were willing to cooperate in the fulfilment of the scheme of His Majesty's Government. In the meantime, Congress had precipitated a conflict with Government in the United Provinces and in the North-West Frontier Province, and proposals had been initiated to start a campaign elsewhere for the boycott of British goods and institutions. The main issue before Government was whether Congress were prepared or not to cooperate in further constitutional discussions; and it was essential to ascertain their attitude and that of Mr. Gandhi towards this fundamental question. It was plain that there could be no cooperation in any accepted sense of the term so long as activities in the United Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province continued. It was also clear that there could be no cooperation under a continuous menace of the renewal of civil disobedience. The telegram of Mr. Gandhi of January 1st and the resolutions of the Working Committee of Congress passed under his advice have left no doubt on this issue. Under the specific threat of a general renewal of civil disobedience, the programme of which has been announced, the Government of India have been asked to accept conditions which would make Mr. Gandhi the arbiter of measures necessary for the maintenance of law and order, and which would leave Congress free to pursue their subversive activities as seemed fit to them. The measure of the cooperation which Congress would extend in return for the acceptance of these conditions is indicated by the announcement of the Working Committee. They have pronounced the declaration of the Prime Minister to be wholly unsatisfactory and

inadequate in terms of the Congress demands, and they have demanded that if their cooperation be accepted, free scope be given to them to prosecute their claim to complete independence. There was clearly no alternative left to the Government of India but to reject these demands, and to take all measures that were necessary to meet the campaign of civil disobedience.

4. Mr. Gandhi has stated as part of his creed that civil disobedience is not only the natural right of the people, especially when they have no effective voice in their own government, but that it is also an effective substitute for violence or armed rebellion. Experience has proved time and again that in this country civil disobedience cannot be carried on without violence and Mr. Gandhi himself has spoken of the sacrifice of a million lives. The civil disobedience as conceived and as practised by Congress is to paralyse the administration and to inflict the maximum of harm on Government, regardless of the loss it may entail to private individuals. It is opposed to all constitutional principles, and if it achieved its object it would make any form of government impossible. In using their full resources against it the Government of India are, therefore, fighting the battle, not only of the present Government but of the Governments of the future. It is particularly incumbent upon them at the present juncture to oppose with their full power a movement which would make constitutional advance impossible. It is their duty to hand over to the new order a working administration, and to this end to resist, with all their might, forces which would create a state of anarchy and chaos. The peaceful progress of India depends on the maintenance of the authority of Government and of respect for the law whatever that Government may be, and the present Government of India would fail lamentably in their obligations to their successors if, during a period of transition, they allowed this fundamental principle to go by default, or were content to permit the usurpation of their functions by any political organization.

An issue of hardly less importance is whether a political organization is to be allowed by lawless means to impose its will on the public, large sections of which deny its authority and oppose its pretensions. Government would fail in their duty

were they to countenance the claims of Congress to control and domination, or permit them, in effect, to assume the position of a parallel Government.

5. The issues before the country are plain. On the one side there is a body to which has twice been offered an opportunity, without precedent, of assisting towards the political advancement of the country. It has twice rejected the offer and has twice chosen to follow the path of destruction rather than of constructive effort. It is determined to inflict untold harm on the country in the pursuit of a position of domination which whole classes of the people will not accept. It persists in methods which, if successful, would uproot the foundations of all government, and would render impossible any system of orderly administration now and in the future.

On the other side, there is the opportunity of cooperation in the great work of constitutional reform to which His Majesty's Government and Parliament are pledged. The Government of India are equally pledged to press forward the work, and this they will do undeterred by the threats of Congress. While they will take every measure that is necessary for the suppression of a lawless movement and for the protection of public and private liberty, they will also spare no effort to bring to completion the policy of His Majesty's Government.

In this task they appeal for the cooperation of all who have at heart the peace and happiness of the people of India and who, rejecting the methods of revolution, desire to follow to its certain goal the path of constitutional advance.

## APPENDIX

### THE REJOINDER OF TO APPEN

[From the last number of *Young India*]

#### A SHAMELESS DOCUMENT

In the statement issued on the 4th inst<sup>a</sup> India over Mr. Emerson's signature, himself. It is packed full of evasions, false statements, suppressions, and dishonest distortions. The militant career on which the Government had started before the Congress had launched Civil Disobedience could not be justified, except in this unscrupulous fashion.

The statement claims to give an account of the state of things before Gandhi went to England and on his return from England. It starts with this very inaccurate preamble: "The movement continued until the beginning of March 1931, by which time, owing partly to the measures taken to meet it, and partly to the steadily decreasing support of the public, it had ceased to be a cause of anxiety to Government." If it had ceased to be a cause of anxiety to Government, why should Lord Irwin have engaged in those long talks leading up to the Truce, and announced in the Settlement over the signature of the same Mr. Emerson that as a result of the conversations between Lord Irwin and Gandhi "it has been arranged that the Civil Disobedience movement be discontinued"? This is followed by the astounding statement that "the Government of India and the local Governments scrupulously observed the terms of the Settlement." Let the reader turn to the pages of *Young India* since the Settlement and see how scrupulously the terms have been observed. In April last year Gandhi had to submit a fair-sized "charge sheet" to Mr. Emerson, who promised to look into the matter. In the last week of May, when Gandhi went to Simla, a fresh charge sheet had to be submitted, or rather the first one with most of the complaints unredressed had to be submitted again. How they were playing with the thing, how they have throughout taxed the patience of the people, and how they have higgledy-miggledy about the fulfilment of their part in the Pact will be apparent from the following instances:

It is a notorious fact that local Governments exhibited the utmost niggardliness in giving effect to the political amnesty which was an

important item in the Delhi Settlement. It must be admitted here in fairness to Mr. Emerson that in the beginning stage he did, with his characteristic whole-heartedness, throw himself into the task of securing a fulfilment of the Pact in Lord Irwin's spirit. But in the months that followed Gandhi discovered to his painful surprise that though the hand was still Esau's, the voice which he heard was Jacob's. The smallest technicalities were seized upon to justify denial of the benefit of the amnesty to scores of prisoners and in many cases not even technical justification could be found. I need not enter a list of such cases here, but the case of Sjt. Rajwade of Sholapur is familiar to Mr. Emerson. Resistance to his release was carried by the Bombay Government almost to breaking-point. When Gandhi reached Simla on May 15th, he discussed the various breaches of the Settlement and pointed out the case of Sjt. Rajwade as a flagrant breach of the Truce. Mr. Emerson could hold out no hope. Gandhi said he would have to denounce the Settlement if Sjt. Rajwade was not released. The next day a letter from the Bombay Government came to say that Sjt. Rajwade could not be released. But Mr. Emerson, who was not quite prepared for a denunciation of the Settlement by Gandhi, was perhaps busy exchanging telephonic messages with Bombay, and so the very next day he rang up to give "Mr. Gandhi the good news that Sjt. Rajwade was released."

The story of the controversies over the details of fulfilment of the Settlement between Gandhi, on the one hand, and Mr. Emerson and local Governments on the other, would fill pages. I have no intention of inflicting the whole story on the reader. To my mind half the grace of the Settlement was robbed the moment it became necessary for Gandhi to devote practically all his time to securing justice on matters of small detail. Some of Gandhi's leading co-workers in the provinces carried on similar negotiations with their respective local Governments. All of them found the utmost difficulty in securing elementary compliance with the terms of the Settlement.

In the circumstances it would have been idle to expect any attempt on the part of Government at translating the spirit of the Settlement into action. The spirit of the Settlement lay killed and buried behind the rigid interpretation and miserly enforcement by Government of the actual letter of the terms of the document. To quote a flagrant instance, Gandhi, in spite of strenuous efforts, never succeeded in securing the readmission of students who had been dismissed from educational institutions for the crime of engaging in political activity.

Whilst employees who had resigned or had been dismissed from Government departments were to be reinstated under certain conditions, no such benefit was allowed to students because, as Mr. Emerson explained, in a laboured and stiffly-worded letter, "the matter had not been raised when the Settlement was under negotiation."

Again, it is an open secret that the Delhi negotiations almost broke down on the question of the restoration to the original owners of the lands in Kaira and Bardoli that had been sold to third parties. The situation was only saved by the tactful intervention of Lord Irwin, who gave a written assurance to Gandhi that the fullest cooperation would be given to the Congress to facilitate the return of these lands to their original owners. How did the bureaucracy implement the assurance given by the head of the Government? Not only did it not raise its little finger to help Congressmen in the matter, but it even put obstacles in their way by refusing to disclose the names of the persons to whom the said properties had been sold and the prices for which they were sold. Every effort to persuade new holders to return land to the original holders proved abortive, owing mainly to the extreme unwillingness of local officials to see the Viceroy's promise fulfilled. Mr. Emerson, when repeatedly approached by Gandhi, felt powerless to do anything in the matter.

Then there is the illuminating instance, already dealt with in *Young India*, of a poor Kaira fisherman's boat that was wrongfully sold after the Truce, and was returned to the original owner only after four months of painful wrangling, and then too without any compensation for the loss of earnings suffered by the owner during the period of wrongful dispossession. The confiscated Navajivan press was returned to the owners at Ahmedabad, after a very long controversy, with the undignified and specious statement that the transport from Bombay was made possible only by "sufficient private funds" being placed at the disposal of the authorities to cover the charges that would be incurred in delivering it at Ahmedabad. The above are only specimens that can be multiplied *ad infinitum*, of flagrant non-fulfilment of the terms of the Truce by the Government and the evasive, undignified, and grudging spirit in which it carried out its terms when absolutely compelled. The agony went on until the end of July, when a third charge sheet had to be submitted in Simla. In fact all the Simla visits would have been unnecessary if Government had honestly observed the Settlement, and there would have been no occasion for the second Settlement there.

I now come to the part of Mr. Emerson's statement in which the Congress is charged with making an "organized attempt to utilize the Settlement . . . for the purpose of adding to the prestige of the Congress and of securing for them and its members a position of privilege, not enjoyed by any other organization or by members of the general public." To take up the second part first, the Government statement obviously seems to forget the fact that the Congress acquired a special status by the very fact of its being one of the two contracting parties to the Delhi Agreement, that the Gandhi-Irwin agreement was a bilateral pact between Government, as represented by Lord Irwin on the one hand, and the Congress, as represented by Gandhi, on the other, and carried with it obligations that were mutual and reciprocal. The principle of impartial arbitration or reference to a third party in case of difference of opinion as to interpretation, or in case of complaints about non-fulfilment of its provisions by either side, was, therefore, inherent in it. The Congress had asked for nothing more than acceptance by the Government of this obvious, essential, and inevitable corollary of the Delhi Agreement. It has always welcomed an impartial scrutiny into the conduct of its members. It is, therefore, not the Congress that has claimed extraordinary privileges for its members; on the contrary, it is the Government that has claimed an unlimited license for itself and its officials by spurning the principle of arbitration and arrogating to itself the astounding status of accuser, jury, and judge rolled into one in what was conceived as a "gentleman's agreement."

Again, it is a travesty of facts to say that the Congress has sought to dictate to Government its policy in matters relating to land revenue and rent. All that the Congress did was to offer to become Government's unpaid tax-gatherer in Gujarat on certain terms, an offer which was gratefully and thankfully accepted by the district authorities concerned. The way in which, later, they went back on the implications of this arrangement showed how the least effort towards meeting Gandhi's wishes on the part of district officers was discountenanced by the higher authorities.

As for the other charge, viz. of using the settlement for preparing for further conflict, it can be easily shown that far from the Congress doing any such thing, it was the Government which carried on a secret war against the Congress under cover of rent collection and the enforcement of law and order. The story of the circular letter issued by a United Provinces Collector directing Taluqdars to furnish complaints against Congressmen, which had to be withdrawn subsequently on its publication by Gandhi, is too well known to need

repetition here. Documentary proof of a similar conspiracy in Karnatak was placed in Gandhi's hands on the eve of his last visit to Simla prior to his departure for England. It was in the form of a circular letter over the signature of Mr. Smart, the Collector of Dharwar, to police officers. The revival of civil disobedience sooner or later was to be treated as a foregone certainty, and district police officers were asked to keep a close watch on the movements and utterances of all Congressmen, with a view to facilitating their prosecution when the time for it came. ✓

Such was the spirit in which officials worked the Truce for which Lord Irwin nobly sacrificed so much of popularity and bureaucratic tradition. On the other hand, Gandhi had reverted to his mentality and methods of by-gone times, when he strove for the redress of grievances with the fullest faith in British justice and fair play. His letters to leading Congressmen calling for the strictest fulfilment of the Settlement and the meticulous care with which he personally investigated every case of complaint from both sides, were matters which drew the admiration and thanks of friend and foe alike, not excluding heads of local Governments and Mr. Emerson himself.

The Statement then accuses the Congress of interfering with private liberty and the freedom of trade under guise of peaceful persuasion. The Congress has always invited the Government to make good its charges before an impartial tribunal, it has itself held full and prompt inquiries whenever the authorities have brought any allegations against the Congress picketers to its notice. It has gone further and offered to make the fullest reparation if the charge against the Congress picketers could be established to its satisfaction or to the satisfaction of an impartial tribunal. But the Government has betrayed a guilty conscience by shirking an open inquiry into the conduct of its officials. Far from the Congress being the aggressor, it is the authorities that have sought to make peaceful picketing that was conceded a method that would do honour to any law-abiding citizen. Rules about the hours and place of picketing in Ahmedabad and other places were deliberately placed on the number of picketers, irrespective of the number of shops watched. Volunteers were forced to stand outside liquor shops, and assaults on Congress dealers were connived at. In the Madras Presidency a ukase was issued to the effect that the pick-



sales was not covered by the Delhi Pact. Its absurdity was so patent that it had ultimately to be withdrawn.

For sheer prevarication it would be difficult to beat the part of the Government Statement in which a case is sought to be made out for banging the door of negotiations in the face of the Congress. For instance, it is stated that "while the Round Table Conference was proceeding in London, the Congress precipitated the conflict in United Provinces by starting a no-rent campaign." The fact, however, is that it was the Government that precipitated the conflict by starting coercive processes against the peasantry while negotiations between the Congress and the Government were still proceeding.

After trotting out the North-West Frontier Province bogey, to which I shall refer later, the Government next seeks to make out that whilst the Government was most eager to secure the cooperation of the Congress in the further deliberations of the Round Table Conference the reiteration by the Working Committee of its claim for complete Independence left no further room for cooperation. All that one can say with regard to this statement is that with all his usual caution, Mr. Emerson has for once rushed in where his masters, Lord Irwin, the Secretary of State, and the Prime Minister, hesitated to tread. Gandhi has more than once defined the contents of the term "complete Independence" that the Congress has claimed. Prosecution of that claim, including the right to secede from the British Empire, was not only not considered an obstacle to Gandhi's participation in the Round Table Conference, either by the Indian Government or the Home Government, but specific assurances were given by Lord Irwin that there would be perfect freedom of discussion at the Round Table Conference.

Now, however, Mr. Emerson, on behalf of Government, takes exception to the claim for Independence being pressed. We cannot resist the conclusion that the whole of the Government statement seeks to give the Congress a bad name in order to hang it. To those of us who were with Gandhi in London, the summary procedure with which Gandhi has been greeted by the Government of India on his return from London is a perfect revelation. Just before leaving London, Gandhi had long talks both with Sir Samuel Hoare and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. The question of the Bengal Ordinance had naturally overshadowed the constitutional question, and while condemning unequivocally the terrorist outrages in Bengal, Gandhi strove patiently to explain his uncompromising opposition to the Ordinance. Nobody, not even the Prime Minister, felt happy in the thought that an Ordinance of that character should have been

promulgated. He requested Gandhi to place his point of view before the Viceroy, and also to use his great influence to wean the terrorists from their methods. This Gandhi gladly undertook to do.

But the constitutional issue was not neglected. Gandhi was able to obtain an assurance that the Committees coming out to India would have real authority to discuss and consider every matter raised, including the removal or substantial modification of the so-called Safeguards and Reservations and an examination of the obligation to be incurred by the incoming Indian Government, and that their reports would be given most careful consideration. It would appear from this that the whole question of the further participation of the Congress in the constitutional negotiations had been made smooth before Gandhi's departure from London.

But the spirit which presumably animated London at the time was far from being in accord with the wishes and intentions of the bureaucracy in India. It is impossible to read in any other light Lord Willingdon's insolent reply to Gandhi's earnest request for an interview, a request based on optimism encouraged in London.

Was Gandhi hopelessly misled by Cabinet Ministers into taking a more cheerful view of Indian prospects than was warranted by facts, or has Lord Willingdon's Government deliberately and mischievously precipitated a crisis of the first magnitude, which may in its ultimate consequence sweep a tottering Empire off its feet and leave England lamenting? Time alone will show.

The references to the North-West Frontier Province call for special notice. Much ado is made over the fact that Congress, by a special statement issued on behalf of the Working Committee, recognized the Khudai Khidmatgar organization under Khan Saheb Abdul Ghaffar Khan's leadership as an affiliated body of the Congress. Government could never pardon this alliance between Congress and a powerful Muslim Province. Apart, however, from vague generalities, has Mr. Emerson been able to prove *one* act of violence by any single Khudai Khidmatgar in that afflicted Province? Is he unaware of the proud sensitiveness of the Pathan? Does he seriously contend that after last year's events in that area which, however, are not sufficiently known to the public, any force but the personality of Khan Saheb Abdul Ghaffar Khan himself could have taught the Pathans the use of the matchless weapon of non-violence? We have not the shadow of a doubt that Khan Saheb's arrest, even like Pt. Jawaharlal's arrest, was part of a deliberate plan to smash the Delhi Settlement before Gandhi returned, and thus to make it next to impossible for him to continue giving his cooperation. Here we

come back again to Lord Willingdon's telegram and maintain most emphatically that the door to negotiation and cooperation was closed by Government before s.s. *Pilsna* passed through the Suez Canal. Gandhi came and asked for bread, he got stone.

The Government betrays a blissful ignorance of past and current history when it argues that it could not possibly continue to negotiate with a body which held Civil Disobedience as its creed. It is a commonplace saying about the British nation that it has always blessed a successful rebellion. No nation has carried to a greater perfection the art of making of ex-rebels national heroes. President Kruger was a rebel, De Valera was a rebel in arms when the British Government treated with him. Nor had the Congress ceased to be a rebel organization when Lord Irwin negotiated the Delhi Agreement with it. But as Gandhi trenchantly put it in his wire to Lord Willingdon, times have changed and with changed times manners have also changed—that is all.

The unkindest cut, however, comes when a pointed reference is made to Gandhi's oft-repeated remark about "the sacrifice of a million lives." The remark is torn out of its context and quoted as if the sacrifice referred not to the lives of innocent satyagrahis, which would be perfectly consistent with the principle of Ahimsa, but their opponents, and an attempt is thus made to show, as it were, on Gandhi's own testimony, that it is utterly impossible to practise civil disobedience in India non-violently. Anybody can see that this is a wicked and unscrupulous distortion of Gandhi's words, and it is a pity that an Englishman should have allowed himself to lapse into such unsportsmanlike conduct, with reference to one whom he called "friend" and who can no longer answer back. May one in all humility suggest that it is not even now too late to make *amende honorable*?

From prevarication to hypocrisy was easy transition. It is sheer hypocrisy, for instance, when the Statement proceeds to say that the Government was compelled to take action against the Congress "to prevent it from imposing by lawless means its will on the public," large sections of which denied its authority, when the obvious fact of the matter is that it is the Government that is trying to stifle public opinion by its Press Ordinance, and is enacting an orgy of terror all over the country by means of its lawless laws, shootings, lathi charges and what not, to prevent the masses from demonstrating their sympathy with the Congress.

The cat is, however, unwittingly let out of the bag when the Government proceeds to justify its crusade against the Congress

on the plea that the Congress could not possibly be permitted to assume the position of a parallel Government. If behind all the tall talk of constitutional advance that one hears every day, there was a real desire to transfer power to popular control, the Government would not only not resist, but welcome such a consummation, which was only recently described by an eminent British statesman as the very *sine qua non* of the establishment of full responsibility in India. But what the Government is contemplating is not to part with the substance of power, but the creation of a powerful commission agency, which would continue to efficiently and faithfully administer the various Safeguards and Reservations that have been devised to perpetuate the numerous vested interests and special privileges held by the alien ruling class and its henchmen in India. Hence all this distrust of the growing power of the Congress. In fact, the Secretary of State, in his speech on the Indian policy in the House of Commons, went as far as to openly suggest that such an arrangement might be found to be more satisfactory than the existing one. That is the rock-bottom truth of the whole matter. All the rest is a mere smoke-screen to hide this damning fact. This is not a position which any self-respecting Indian can accept without being guilty of a gross betrayal of his country. And every true Indian is therefore bound to resist it with his life.

PYARELAL

## APPENDIX IV

### THE HOARE-GANDHI CORRESPONDENCE

*(as published in India, with comments by Pandit Malaviya)*

IN the course of his wireless broadcast in London, "taking stock" of the situation in India, Sir Samuel Hoare referred to the "stories" that he gave Mr. Gandhi certain undertakings and had promised to write him a letter, and said :

"These rumours are unfounded. After leaving England Mr. Gandhi wrote to me about the work of the Consultative Committee and asked me to send a reply. I acceded to his request. My letter should have reached him on his return home."

It is necessary, in the public interest, that the whole truth about this matter should be known.

After the Prime Minister's declaration and Sir Samuel Hoare's speech in the House of Commons, Mr. Gandhi felt that if they were the last words on the subject of Safeguards and Reservations, he could not hope to cooperate in the further work of the Round Table Conference. But he desired to cooperate if it were possible and, therefore, before leaving London, in his last interview with Sir Samuel Hoare, he asked him specifically about it and other connected matters.

Sir Samuel Hoare's reply gave him the assurance which Mr. Gandhi wanted. Mr. Gandhi mentioned to me the result of the conversation, and I suggested that as the matter was important he should get his impression of the conversation confirmed by Sir Samuel Hoare in writing.

Mr. Gandhi wrote to Sir Samuel Hoare from Switzerland, and got Sir Samuel Hoare's reply by Air Mail shortly after his arrival in Bombay.

The full texts of the letters are given below.

#### MR. GANDHI'S LETTER

"DEAR SIR SAMUEL,

"I am reducing in writing the gist of our last conversation. You were good enough to say that neither the Prime Minister's declaration nor your speech in the House of Commons were the last word on the Safeguards or Reservations, and it would be open

to any member of the proposed Working Committee to suggest amendments or removal of any of them, as also to press for an independent investigation of the financial transactions to be taken over by the National Government.

"You also said that whatever you would be sending to the Working Committee for consideration would not be merely formal, but that the Working Committee's recommendations would receive the greatest consideration from His Majesty's Government.

"If this is the correct impression, I would like you, if you do not mind, to confirm it by Air Mail. My address in India would be Ahmedabad.

"Yours sincerely,

"(Signed) M. K. GANDHI

"C/o Monsieur R. Rolland,  
Villeneuve.

"December 7, 1931."

#### SIR SAMUEL HOARE'S REPLY

"INDIA OFFICE,

"WHITEHALL,

"December 16, 1931.

"DEAR MR. GANDHI,

"I am replying to your letter of the 7th December, from Villeneuve.

"First of all as to your last point. The procedure of conference and consultation is in the forefront of our policy.

"The Prime Minister and I and Lord Hailsham made it sufficiently clear, I think, in our speeches.

"The Working Committee is an essential feature of this procedure in the next stage. Its proceedings, therefore, far from being purely formal, will necessarily receive from His Majesty's Government the fullest consideration. Within the usual limits of order, it will be open to any member of the Committee to raise any question which he thinks relevant to, and likely to further, the plans the Conference has in view.

"As regards the reservations and safeguards, the Prime Minister and I have stated the substance of what, after the most serious considerations, we regard as necessary.

"We have also given indication of what we should consider appropriate means of securing these requirements of substance.

"Much will, of course, depend upon the precise terms in which they are translated into statutory provisions.

"If the Working Committee can make suggestions which will satisfy the Government and which we can commend to both Houses of Parliament, as effectively providing for what is required, and are at the same time more acceptable to Indian opinion, we should, of course, hope to find no difficulty in carrying into effect the Committee's view.

"I think that this confirms your impression of our conversation, but I have preferred to put it in my own words.

*"(Signed) SAMUEL HOARE"*

The correspondence makes clear (1) that Mr. Gandhi did desire to cooperate in the future work of the Conference and, therefore, sought to clear what he felt might stand in the way of his doing so, and (2) that Sir Samuel Hoare did assure Mr. Gandhi that the obstacles which he apprehended in the way of that cooperation did not exist.

It were unbelievable, if it were not true, that the Secretary of State, who had written the letter quoted above, should have let the Viceroy refuse an interview to Mr. Gandhi, which was sought to smooth the path of cooperation, and furthermore, that he should have sanctioned the arrest and imprisonment of Mr. Gandhi two days after the receipt of such a letter.

Little does Sir Samuel Hoare realize what damage he has done to the reputation of British statesmen by the course he adopted in this sorry affair.

M. M. MALAVIYA

## APPENDIX V

### PANDIT MALAVIYA'S STATEMENT OF THE NATIONALIST CASE

In the course of the speech which Your Excellency addressed to the Legislative Assembly on the 25th instant, you laid the blame for precipitating the conflict on the Congress. In a letter replying to the telegram which I sent him, Sir Samuel Hoare also has said: "I wish that the Congress had not acted with so much precipitancy." Fairness to Mahatma Gandhi and public interests imperatively demand that the truth about this matter should be established beyond cavil or dispute.

In the statement published by the Government of India on the 4th instant, which, I regret to say, contained many mis-statements regarding the Congress, it was said:

"Mr. Gandhi had given no clear indication of whether he or the Congress, whom he represents, were willing to cooperate in the fulfilment of the scheme of His Majesty's Government."

This was clearly opposed to facts. Before leaving London, Mahatma Gandhi and I had separate interviews, both with the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State, and the question of Mahatma Gandhi's cooperation in the further work of the Conference was discussed. In the conversation in reply to Mahatma Gandhi's question, Sir Samuel Hoare had told Mahatma Gandhi that neither the Prime Minister's declaration nor his speech in the House of Commons was the last word on the safeguards or reservations, and that it would be open to any member of the proposed working Committee to suggest amendments or removal of any of them, as also to press for an investigation of the financial obligations to be taken over by the National Government. I suggested to Mahatma Gandhi to get this assurance reduced to writing as the matter was important. He did write and I know it for a fact that in his reply Sir Samuel Hoare repeated the assurance. It is obvious that the object of Mahatma Gandhi in asking for this assurance was to make it possible for him to cooperate in the work of the Committee, and I know it for a fact that he had assured both the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State that he would try his best to do so. On the day of his arrival in India, he stated publicly that he was anxious to cooperate with the Government. He said:



"I landed with the hope that I should find out ways and means of tendering cooperation, but when I find that at every step there is a huge boulder, what am I to do? I am dying to find those ways and means."

Mahatma Gandhi found that on the top of the Bengal Ordinance the United Provinces and the Frontier Ordinances had been passed, shootings had taken place in the Frontier, and some of his valued comrades had been arrested. Notwithstanding all this, he wired to Your Excellency, with the unanimous approval of the Congress Working Committee, asking for an interview, so that he might "receive guidance from you as to the course I am to pursue in advising Congress." This was on December 29th. Speaking on the following day at Calcutta, and referring to the activities of the Congress in the United Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province, Your Excellency said:

"I venture to hope that even at this eleventh hour, Mr. Gandhi, the acknowledged leader of the Congress Party, who has only very recently returned from England, will call a halt to those activities, and will agree to cooperate with us, and give us the advantage of his powerful influence to help forward a solution of the great problem that is before us, namely, to secure for the Indian people responsibility for administering their own affairs."

When Your Excellency had made this appeal, why did you decline Mahatma Gandhi's request for an interview, which he sought in order to know the Government points of view of the question on which you had appealed to him to advise the Congress? Why did you attach conditions to which no self-respecting person could, under similar circumstances, agree, and why did you particularly lay down that even if you granted an interview, you would not be prepared to discuss with Mahatma Gandhi the measures which the Government had adopted in Bengal, United Provinces, and the North-West Frontier Province when you had asked him to call a halt to certain activities in those very Provinces? Replying on December 31, 1931, to Your Excellency's telegram, Mahatma Gandhi met every objection which Your Excellency had raised, and said:

"And, if it is not yet too late, I would ask His Excellency to reconsider his decision and see me as a friend, without imposing any condition whatsoever as to the scope or subject of discussion, and I, on my part, can promise that I will study with an open mind all the facts that he might put before me. I would unhesitatingly and willingly go to the respective Provinces, and with the aid of the

authorities, study both sides of the question, and if I come to the conclusion, after such a study, that the people were in the wrong and that the Working Committee, including myself, were misled as to the correct position, and that the Government was right, I should have no hesitation whatsoever in making that open confession and guiding the Congress accordingly."

Your Excellency must have noted that the Working Committee's resolution was a tentative one and that it still proffered cooperation to the Government. It said :

"Meanwhile, Working Committee is prepared to tender cooperation to the Government, provided His Excellency the Viceroy reconsiders his telegram and adequate relief is granted in respect of the Ordinances and its recent acts, and free scope is left to the Congress in any future negotiations and consultations to prosecute the Congress claim for complete Independence, and the administration of the country is carried on in consultation with popular representatives, pending the attainment of such Independence."

And it made it clear that it was only in the event of a satisfactory response not forthcoming that the Working Committee called upon the nation to resume civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes, under the conditions and illustrative heads which were specified, and it added: "The absence of any satisfactory response from the Government in terms of the foregoing paragraph the Working Committee will regard as an indication on the part of the Government that it has reduced to nullity the Delhi Pact."

Your Excellency unfortunately persisted in rejecting Mahatma Gandhi's offer on the ground that you "could not invite him, with the hope of any advantage, to an interview held under the threat of the resumption of civil disobedience," and you told him that your Government must hold him and the Congress "responsible for all the consequences which may ensue from the action which the Congress have announced their intention of taking and to meet which the Government will take all necessary action."

Mahatma Gandhi yet again wired expressing his deep regret at the decision of your Excellency and your Government. He told Your Excellency that it was wrong to describe an honest expression of opinion as a threat. He reminded you that the Delhi negotiations were opened and carried on while civil disobedience was on, and that when the pact was made civil disobedience was not given up but only discontinued, that this position was re-asserted and accepted by Your Excellency and your Government in Simla in September last, prior to Mr. Gandhi's departure for London, that although he

had made it clear that under certain circumstances the Congress might have to resume civil disobedience, the Government did not break off negotiations, and that had they resented that attitude, it was open to them not to send him to London. But Your Excellency did not relent. No further reply was received by Mahatma Gandhi and his arrest and imprisonment swiftly followed. Allow me very respectfully to say that these facts clearly show that it was not Mahatma Gandhi or the Congress but Your Excellency's Government who forced a conflict.

Your Excellency knew that Mahatma Gandhi is the greatest Indian living, that for the purity and unselfishness of his life, and his high-souled devotion to the cause of his country and of humanity he is adored by countless millions in India and widely respected in all parts of the world. You could imagine that whether it be this year or next year, when a new constitution is introduced in India, in all human probability, Your Excellency will have to hand over charge of the country's affairs to Mahatma Gandhi. You also knew that your refusal to see him might lead to a terrible situation arising in the country. It is a calamity that Your Excellency did not realize that such a man had a right to expect the courtesy of an interview from Your Excellency as the head, for the time being, of the Government of the country. The refusal of the courtesy was a flagrant departure from the path of conciliation laid out through the Delhi Pact. More than that, it was a national affront to India.

Your Excellency and the Government have gone much farther. You have virtually substituted a reign of Ordinances for a reign of Law. The Government of India Act, no doubt, gives the Governor-General power in cases of emergency to make and promulgate Ordinances for the peace and good government of British India or any part thereof. But though not the letter, the spirit of the Act requires that in places where regular legislatures exist, this power should be exercised by the Governor-General only when there is not time to ask the legislature to give to the Executive the additional power which it may consider to be necessary for its purpose. When, therefore, legislatures exist, the emergency powers of the Governor-General are meant to be exercised only on extremely rare occasions. I regret to think that in promulgating the series of Ordinances which Your Excellency has issued, these considerations have not received sufficient weight. Let me explain. I will take the first of them, the one relating to Bengal.

Let me repeat at the outset that I strongly condemn and deplore the crimes that have taken place in Bengal. I hold it a great sin

that any person should kill another, except in the right of private self-defence or in repelling an invasion of one's country. But I also strongly condemn the very severe and drastic Ordinance that Your Excellency has passed for Bengal. It was the severest and most sweeping Ordinance which had ever been promulgated in India. Its provisions are most arbitrary and unjust, and expose innocent citizens to unnecessary injury and humiliation.

Before I left London, I saw the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State, several other members of the British Cabinet, the Leader of the Opposition, and some leading lawyers and two ex-Viceroy, and particularly drew their attention to the most objectionable character of the Ordinance. I pointed out that it was most unfortunate that such an Ordinance should have been passed while the Round Table Conference was going on in London, and urged that the Ordinance should be withdrawn, or, failing that, substantially amended so as to remove its worst features. Mahatma Gandhi also had spoken to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State and to several others about it. Other Indians also had made strong representations to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State against the Ordinance, and had urged its amendment. More than one British public man indicated that they were ashamed of the Ordinance. In the result Your Excellency was to be moved in the matter. The Secretary of State was to consider suggestions which some of us had made; Mahatma Gandhi was to visit Bengal to use his influence to wean terrorists from their creed. The object was to ensure that while the law should punish and prevent crime in every reasonable way, the accused should receive a fair trial, and the people, as a whole, should not be terrorized or deprived of their ordinary right; also that an atmosphere should be created in which the further work of constitution-making could be satisfactorily carried on. But the step so precipitately taken by Your Excellency's Government made the realization of these objects impossible. The Ordinance was professedly aimed against the terrorist movement. In practice it has been used to crush the entire Congress movement in Bengal and to demoralize the people.

Furthermore. While this was going on in London, Your Excellency was advised to promulgate another equally drastic Ordinance for the United Provinces. While it could be said for the Bengal Ordinance that it had been promulgated because of the political crimes committed in that Province, nothing like it could be urged for the promulgation of the Ordinance in the United Provinces.

I submit that the statements of the Provincial Governments of

the United Provinces and of the Frontier do not support the contention of the Government, which Your Excellency has reiterated, that the Congress had wantonly torn the Pact and thereby compelled the Government to depart from the path of conciliation. If the Government still desired to pursue that path, they would not improbably have postponed promulgating the Ordinances by one week in the case of the Frontier Province, and by two weeks in the case of the United Provinces, to give a chance to Mr. Gandhi to correct or forbid any activities which might be open to objection. Further, if that were the case, the Governments of the United Provinces and the Frontier Province would surely have put off the arrests of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. Sherwani and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and allowed them to continue their journey to Bombay to meet Mr. Gandhi.

I submit, Your Excellency, that it is now perfectly clear that the sins of the Congress in the two Provinces named were not the reason for the course adopted by the Government. The real reason was the change of policy which Government had deliberately decided upon, which was to choke off the civil disobedience movement and to crush the Congress. The spirit of freedom which has been developed among the people, and the constitutional and other reforms, including Indianization of various services, have been in the main the result of the activities and influence of the Congress. The bulk of the European members of the Indian Civil Service, and of Europeans generally in this country, have for that reason been opposed to the Congress since it was born, nearly fifty years ago. They have often tried to kill it. But the Congress has lived and succeeded in spite of them. When, after nearly a year of resolute Government, Your Excellency's predecessor in office considered it wise and just to enter upon a truce last year with the Congress, through Mahatma Gandhi, there were, unfortunately, many among these Europeans in India, both official and non-official, who were opposed to any settlement between the Congress and the Government. They were opposed to the idea of the Round Table Conference also and, frankly, did not want that the Congress should be represented at it. These men clamoured against the policy of your predecessor. It was an open secret that the bulk of the European members of the Indian Civil Service chafed under it. A large body of the Conservatives and other reactionaries in England had all along openly attacked it. But the policy prevailed for the time, because the Labour Government was still in office and the policy of the Round Table Conference had been adopted, the second meeting of the Conference

was to be held, and it was necessary for its success that Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress should be invited to take part in it. But the Conference had been held. Mr. Gandhi had attended it. A strong Conservative Party had come to Parliament. A strong Conservative had been appointed Secretary of State for India. The strength of the Congress had grown and was likely to grow further. It was not likely to be satisfied with the reforms proposed unless they secured the substance of independence to India. And it seems Your Excellency and the Secretary of State decided that the time was opportune for a change of policy and for launching a strong, well-planned, comprehensive attack on the Congress all over India, with a view to crush it.

The new policy was of course decided upon in consultation with His Majesty's Government. As was expected, the Secretary of State, Sir Samuel Hoare, supported in the strongest way he could the "severe and rigid measures" which had been adopted. "So long as we are responsible for the government of India," he is reported to have said, "we are determined to govern." And referring to the drastic and comprehensive action taken in Bengal and elsewhere, he did not blush to affirm that "it was wiser, safer, and more humane to deal with such a situation as a whole, than piecemeal."

The pronouncements and action of the Government culminating in the statement of January 4th, clearly indicates that even before the return home of Mahatma Gandhi, the Government had determined to launch a general attack on the Congress, and had coolly concerted their plans for it. Herein, it seems, lies the true explanation of Your Excellency's refusal to grant an interview to Mahatma Gandhi.

## APPENDIX VI

### THE BOMBAY EUROPEANS AND THE CONGRESS

UNCEASINGLY the Congress leaders are accused of having had no desire to convert the Truce into a lasting peace. They are charged with having forced the fight on the Government behind the back of Mr. Gandhi when he was in London. The following extracts from the statement by Mr. Abercrombie before the European Association of Bombay on February 16th, are therefore relevant. It shows that as early as August 1931, while Mr. Gandhi was spending weary weeks in the Gujerat villages implementing the terms of the Truce, the Bombay Europeans were evolving a well-organized plan to crush the Congress, and were using their influence to dictate to the Government their policy against the Congress. The subsequent measures taken by the Bombay Government show how closely the Government has followed the plan originated by the European Association. But let this illuminating statement of Mr. Abercrombie speak for itself.

"To obtain a true perspective of our activities during the past six weeks, it is necessary to go back to the month of August. At that time it seemed to the Committee that some action on their part was necessary to coordinate the divergent views of the European community, and to formulate a policy which would embrace the highest common factor of European opinion in Bombay. After consultation with various people a policy was drafted which received the unanimous approval of an extraordinary general meeting, held on September 2nd, and, as this policy has been published on every possible occasion, I do not propose to repeat its five clauses.

"Having decided upon our policy, the next step was to consider ways and means by which it could be put into effect, and our first move was to arrange for a deputation to wait on the Home Member. The object of this deputation was twofold: firstly, we desired to put forward a definite case of a breach of the Delhi Pact on behalf of one of our members, and secondly, to discuss with the Home Member our line of action in the event of a further outbreak of the Civil Disobedience movement, should one unhappily occur, and to secure an assurance from him that Government intended to take prompt measures to deal with the situation. . . .

"With regard to the Civil Disobedience movement, we were assured that Government was fully alive to the situation which would arise

and intended to take adequate steps to meet it. We were, however, invited to put forward our suggestions in writing, and to this end a letter was addressed to Government in October. The contents of this letter have not been made public because, although we were determined that liberty of the subject must be safeguarded and that law and order must be enforced with a firm hand, we were anxious to refrain from any action which might be deemed to be provocative, or which might endanger the success of the Round Table Conference. I, therefore, wish to emphasize that the proposal in our letter related solely to the situation which we visualized would arise, if and when Conference methods failed and civil disobedience was re-started.

"In this letter we stressed the necessity for firm and, above all, prompt action. We pointed out that the Congress leaders have always said that they were at war with the Government, and we urged that any further outbreak should be treated as a declaration of war from them, and that their friends and supporters should be treated as enemy citizens. We urged (1) the prompt arrest of all the known leaders of the Civil Disobedience movement; (2) the seizure of funds intended to finance the movement; and (3) the vital necessity for more and better propaganda. These three points we have put forward on every possible occasion and shall continue to repeat them until peace is finally restored. Little need be said in connection with the first two points, but the third, propaganda, has been developed by concrete proposals.

"It has been felt for many years past that Government had no organization with which to reach the ear of the masses and that the perverted and distorted statements made by the Congress were never contradicted, or if they were the refutation was published too late. From time to time we have made the following specific recommendations:

- "(1) That in view of the vital importance of India's recognizing the full import of the policy of reform announced by the Prime Minister and subsequently ratified by the British Parliament, leaflets in the vernacular containing extracts from the White Paper should be distributed throughout the Presidency. This has been done.
- "(2) That Government should make plain as soon as possible their intentions with regard to the Round Table Conference Committees, publish the names of the personnel, and



thereafter give all possible publicity to their deliberations. The first part has been done.

- “(3) That, to prevent any possibility of misunderstandings in the minds of innocent people, the true import and meaning of the Ordinances should be made plain. This has been done.
- “(4) That Government should use the wireless for broadcasting short daily news bulletins in the vernacular.
- “(5) That district officers should, when touring their districts, make plain to the villagers the true facts of the Government case *vis-à-vis* Congress. Orders have been issued.

“I would like to say a few words on the Ordinances. We, none of us, like Ordinance rule, but this fight was thrust upon Government, and if the ordinary laws of the land were inadequate to cope with the situation, Government was fully entitled to promulgate Ordinances to ensure the maintenance of law and order. It was a matter of government or anarchy, and all right-minded citizens must support government. There have been many complaints against the Ordinances and particularly against the indignity of the order to report daily to the police. The Committee have very carefully considered this latter question, and recently wrote to Government, recommending that released prisoners should not be required to report daily to the police if any other means could be devised for effecting Government's purpose, provided always that there was no danger of abuse nor any weakening of the powers necessary to Government. In other words, while we are quite determined upon the necessity for putting away persons who constitute a menace to the public peace, we are not in favour of inflicting unnecessary indignities upon them. We have been informed that Government have given careful consideration to our proposal, but find it impossible to alter the procedure which has been adopted.

“The question of picketing and the methods of dealing with picketers are matters to which we have given a great deal of consideration. Picketing is used by Congress just as a matador used the red cloak in a bull-fight—to distract the attention of the bull and to tire him out. The majority of this Committee believe that if the leaders are arrested, the funds sequestered, and that merchants think that Government will win, and are assured that they will be protected against future attacks by the Congress, picketing will die a natural death.

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"On the other hand, they realize that arrests are necessary, particularly in the bazaars, but they are not in favour of the whole-sale arrest of picketers."

The following resolution was then moved by Mr. Hammond and passed unanimously:

"That the Bombay Branch of the European Association wholeheartedly supports the dual policy outlined in His Excellency the Viceroy's speech to the Assembly on January 25th, under which, simultaneously with the suppression of the Civil Disobedience movement, the Government will press on with the steps to be taken to implement the programme of constitutional reforms outlined in the Prime Minister's recent declaration and confirmed by the British Parliament."

To this it may be added that the activities of the European Association in Calcutta, and its influence on the Government, as noted by Mr. Kellas (pp. 48, 49) are even more notorious. The European business men in Calcutta are, generally, more reactionary than those of Bombay. It was at a European dinner (quite unofficial) that the Governor of Bombay announced the promulgation of the Ordinance of November 1931. It might have been supposed that propriety would have dictated a more seemly moment for such an announcement. Moreover, the Viceroy himself spent some weeks in Calcutta just before the change of policy became general; and as far back as the previous August young European "Royalists" in Calcutta had been boasting that when he came there they would bend him to their will.

## APPENDIX VII

### SOME OTHER DIFFICULTIES

THERE are a number of other difficulties common in the minds of Englishmen with which we may deal briefly, for the most part in Mahatma Gandhi's own words.

1. *If India is really united in her desire for freedom, why was there so much disagreement at the Round Table Conference?*

The reason is simple: it is to be found in the composition of the Conference itself. "It is too unreal for words. There are men who claim to represent communities which, if they were in India, and if a referendum were taken, would disown them." "The attainment of unity has been rendered a task of Herculean difficulty by the composition of the Conference itself as all the delegates here are nominated, none of them is duly elected. . . . Even if the present delegates had been elected they would have acted with a better sense of responsibility. We are here on the sufferance of the British Prime Minister. We are responsible to nobody, we have no constituency to appeal to." "You cannot have a united demand from a packed conference."

The unrepresentative character of the Round Table Conference needs stressing. All the members of the Conference came as individuals who had been personally selected and invited by the Government—by the Viceroy or the Secretary of State. At the first session, as the Congress refused to participate, the Government had, indeed, no alternative but to invite men and women from smaller groups or parties, or men of some administrative experience who had no personal following; and such members, once invited, could not very well be dropped again. The large measure of agreement and the vigorous progress achieved in the first Conference were undoubtedly due in part to the great desire of members to justify themselves in the eyes of their fellow-countrymen; public opinion in India very generally regarded them as time-servers, and their attendance while Mr. Gandhi and other Congress leaders were in jail, a treachery to the national cause.

In the second Conference the whole position was changed. Mr. Gandhi, with the whole authority of the Congress behind him, was

in London; the leaders of the many little groups of the "right" were his colleagues; in London their authority appeared equal to his; they could indulge in the gentle art of putting spokes into his wheel. The groups of the "left," on the other hand, had no special representation. Next to Mr. Gandhi himself, probably Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has much the biggest personal following in India. Up and down the country, in towns and in villages, his portrait is to be found in houses, even in the houses of young Indian officials. The Aga Khan and other "leaders" in the Round Table Conference can claim no such distinction. Mr. Nehru represents the aspirations of a large mass of Indian youth—not of one creed or caste alone, but of all—who totally distrust British professions, but are filled with a passionate longing to suffer for India, and to prove their ability to serve their country and to reshape it in accordance with the new social outlook. The generous enthusiasm of Indian youth is personified in him. He is no agent of Moscow, but the Socialist leader of Young India.

Again, large sections of Moslem opinion, including, perhaps, the majority of educated young Moslems, wholly repudiate the Moslem "leaders" who were members of the Conference. It is doubtful whether any one of those leaders could muster a following to compare with those who accept the leadership of Dr. M. A. Ansari, head of the Moslem Nationalist Party. Abdul Ghaffar Khan is a still more radical leader, with an enormous and devoted Moslem following on the North-West Frontier; and there are important radical Moslem groups in Bombay and also in Bengal, where a large Moslem party has recently rejected the demand put forward in London for separate communal electorates. The same thing has happened in Madras.

Moderate Labour was well represented, but the more radical, Socialist element in the Indian Labour Movement, which has grown rapidly, and is quite as strong, was unrepresented. The three women members of the Conference were selected in a most haphazard way. Mrs. Naidu is always a force in herself, but the other two, though better qualified than many of their male colleagues, could not and did not claim to be the accredited representatives of the politically conscious womanhood of India, which is far more radical in the main than any of the three. So the list could be continued; the "untouchable" members were unrepresentative; the voice of the peasants, 90 per cent. of all India, could only be heard when Mr. Gandhi spoke.

Mr. Gandhi really stands at the very centre in Indian politics to-day—or perhaps even to the right of the centre. In the Round Table Conference, which represented the day-before-yesterday and forgot to-morrow, he seemed to be a solitary figure of the left. Paradoxical

as it may seem, if the Government had really wished to deal with all India, it would have done better to invite Mr. Gandhi alone than such an indigestible assortment of unrepresentative nominees.

2. *If British control is withdrawn from India, will not Mussalmans and Hindus be constantly at each other's throats?*

"I know," said Mahatma Gandhi at Cambridge, "that every honest Englishman wants to see India free, but is it not tragic for them to feel that the moment British arms are removed there would be invasions and internecine strife? Well, as against that my contention is that it is the British presence that is the cause of internal chaos, because you have ruled India according to the principle of 'Divide and rule.' . . . And why this over-anxiety about how we would fare without you? Go to the pre-British period. History does not record a large number of Hindu-Muslim riots. In fact, the history of my own times shows a darker record. The fact is that the British are powerless to prevent riots, though they are powerful enough to punish the guilty and the innocent." "We will continue to be divided," he said again elsewhere, "so long as the wedge of foreign rule remains there, and sinks deeper and deeper." "This quarrel is coeval with the British advent, and immediately this relationship, the unfortunate, artificial, unnatural relationship, with Great Britain is transformed into a natural relationship, you will find that Hindus, Mussalmans, Sikhs, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Christians, Untouchables, will all live together as one man."

Some sceptics may feel that these expressions of Mr. Gandhi's, though they contain an important part of the truth, still do not wholly meet the difficulty. Even the Congress resolution (p. 65) recognized "with sorrow that the communal harmony could not be attained at the [Round Table] Conference." Nor was this wholly due to its unrepresentative character. It is known that Mr. Gandhi had himself doubted the wisdom of attending a Conference in London until a Hindu-Moslem pact had been made in India, to which all important sections of Moslem opinion would adhere. Such a political understanding should not be difficult to achieve, once the communally minded leaders have made up their minds that a settlement of some kind is inevitable; recent troubles in Bombay may, indeed, quicken the sense of responsibility in the recalcitrant leaders. The danger of communal outbreaks in some of the larger towns at times of religious festivals will no doubt remain so long as ignorance and superstition persist, and while economic divisions are acute. These

are sores in the body politic which none but a national government can hope to solve. An alien government is powerless to prevent them; and it has been abundantly shown that the most effective peace-promoting agency, when outbreaks do occur, is to be found in the Congress volunteers, who include all communities. But under the present Government, for reasons of prestige, the intervention of the Congress volunteers is not welcome as a rule.

3. *If England withdraws, what will happen to the untouchables?*

In recent years the aspect of this question has fundamentally changed, and there is little doubt but that world opinion and enlightened Indian opinion will find adequate means, with the assistance of suitable constitutional safeguards, to prevent widespread tyranny of Brahmins over untouchables in a free India.

"Let the whole world know," said Mahatma Gandhi in London, "that to-day there is a body of Hindu reformers who are pledged to remove this blot of untouchability." "I will not bargain away their rights for the kingdom of the whole world." "Separate electorates and separate reservation is not the way to remove this bar sinister . . . it will create a division in Hinduism. . . . I do not mind the untouchables being converted to Islam or Christianity. I should tolerate that, but I cannot possibly tolerate what is in store for Hinduism if there are two divisions set forth in the villages." "Many untouchables have the fullest faith in the Congress." "They know the work that the Congress is doing for them and they know that, if they cannot succeed in making their voice felt, I would be prepared to lead a campaign of civil resistance on their behalf, and paralyse the Hindu orthodox opposition, if there were such an opposition against them." "I should have the most drastic legislation, rendering criminal all the social persecution to which these fellow-countrymen of mine are subjected by the so-called superior classes. Thank God, the conscience of Hindus has been stirred; will soon be a relic of our sinful past."

4. *If British protection is withdrawn, will across the frontier?*

"We are not such a nation of absolute run away from risk. Better that we we: earth than remain alive sustained by must trust us to know how to patch up with invasions. India, which has surviv

showed a culture and a civilization unsurpassed by any on earth, need not be pitied and kept in cotton wool." "As to the difficulties of the transition period, they may be very little greater soon than late. If the sense of prestige makes it impossible to secure the services of British military experts, these will have to be secured from France or elsewhere."

It should be noted that Mr. Gandhi's claim for control of India's defence means the right of India's elected representatives to vote the military budget. He is not demanding the immediate withdrawal of all British troops or British officers.

5. *What will happen to the administration? How can we give freedom TILL SHE PROVES HERSELF FIT TO GOVERN?*

"Every country is entitled to complete independence," said Mahatma Gandhi in London, "without any question of its fitness or otherwise. As every country is fit to eat, to drink, and to breed, even so is every nation fit to manage its own affairs no matter how badly. The doctrine of fitness to govern is mere eyewash." "If we cannot handle our affairs to-day," he asked a group of professors at Oxford, "who is to say when we will be able to do so? I do not want you to determine the pace. Consciously or unconsciously you adopt the rôle of divinity. I ask you for a moment to come down from that pedestal. Trust us to ourselves. I cannot imagine anything worse happening than is happening to-day, a whole humanity lying prostrate at the feet of a nation." "The best way," he said again, "is for Englishmen to withdraw from India and let her manage or mismanage her affairs as England is doing. But in India Englishmen are like jailors dictating to the Indians the rules of good behaviour, and India is one vast prison-house. Well, *we* shall have to render account of ourselves and you too. The best thing for you would be to end this unnatural relationship." "As to India's international obligations, the stake of India's own business men is much greater than that of foreign nationals in India, and as business interests and obligations are so closely intertwined, there need be little fear that, given good will, the interests of British business men will suffer unjust treatment."

6. *But why has Congress no constructive scheme to put forward?*

This allegation is based on ignorance. Several years ago the Congress took the initiative in calling the representatives of other

political parties together in an All-Parties Conference, and a representative group worked out a Constitution which has since been known as the Nehru Report. This was in the nature of a compromise, based on Dominion Status. Some of the other parties rejected certain of its features, and the Congress, after having first accepted it, thereupon repudiated the proposals that would have left India in a position of dependence upon Britain. But the framework of the Constitution still stands; and it is on such a basis that the Constitution of Free India will, no doubt, be erected, when India's real leaders are allowed a free hand.

Again, the Congress is committed to a programme of drastic social reform and economic development, sketched at the Karachi Congress in 1931. And its workers are (when not in jail) actively promoting the welfare of the masses in the towns and villages all over India. This is the finest kind of constructive work.

#### 7. *What about the Indian Princes and their States?*

Colonel K. N. Haksar, one of the representatives of the Indian Princes in the Round Table Conference, published an article in the *Spectator* of September 19, 1931, which would certainly be endorsed by other States representatives. He there "repudiated the doctrine that the removal of British control from India must sound the death-knell of the States," nor, he added, would Indian Princes be frightened by the "portentous bugbear Mahatma Gandhi." "As an idealist," wrote Colonel Haksar, "Gandhi doubtless would like to mould each of those States nearer to his heart's desire, but with him it would always be a case of mending, not of ending." "Gandhi trusts the States, and trust begets trust." "Was there ever a man," concludes Colonel Haksar, "whose motives were worse misconceived, whose ideals were regarded as more impracticable, and whose determination more under-rated than this man of Destiny?"

Actually, a number of Indians, including many of the younger members of Congress, are disposed to criticize Mahatma Gandhi for being too friendly to the Princes. They would like him to insist more often on the need for democratic institutions, for human rights, for economy in Court expenditure. But he knows well that these things can best be achieved when India is free to control her own affairs. He can be outspoken enough when the occasion arises.



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